

MYSTERIOUS SAUCER SIGHTED! END OF WORLD IMMINENT?

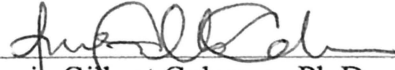
AMERICAN FLYING SAUCER BELIEF
AND RESISTANCE TO THE COLD WAR ORDER
1947-1970

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Arts
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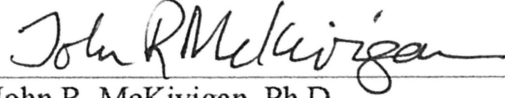
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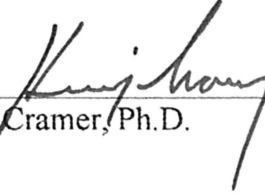


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DEDICATION

For Hiram and “The Boys”

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Chapter One

The Land of the Flying Saucers

The July night was warm and humid, like most July nights in Indianapolis.

Aimee and her brother Doug¹ drove home from work, tired after a long evening. As they sped down the tree-lined street, Aimee rested her head against the cool glass of the window staring aimlessly at the dark sky.

“...And that’s the nine o’clock news. Stay tuned for more on the news and talk of Indiana, 1070, WIB...” The radio cut out with a stab of rough static.

“What was that?” demanded Aimee, jerked from her drowsiness.

“I don’t know,” said Doug, fiddling with the radio knobs. “It’s never done that before.”

“Doug!” Aimee pointed to the sky to the right of the road. Gliding over the treetops was a bright light darting left and right, up and down as they watched.

“Well it’s not fireworks, I don’t think,” Doug said, his voice trailing off.

“Of course it’s not fireworks. Look, there’s another one. I think they’re coming this way.”

By this time, Doug had stopped the car in the middle of the street and was staring ahead as the two glowing lights floated toward them. His knuckles were white on the steering wheel, his jaw clenched in an effort not to scream/cry/laugh at being face-to-face with the unknown.

¹ While the names “Aimee” and “Doug” are fictitious, this sighting was indeed reported to the National UFO Reporting Center in August of 2002. The sighting report is archived at <http://www.nuforc.org/webreports/024/S24712.html>

The car's headlights shut off, along with the streetlights outside, leaving the two strange objects as the only illumination. Aimee became aware of a faint humming that grew louder as the objects drew closer. She looked over at Doug. His eyes were squeezed closed now and his lips moved, silently uttering a prayer to a god that suddenly seemed very far away.

And then they were gone.

Doug opened his eyes. The headlight and streetlamps were back on. He slid the gearshift into drive and sped down the road, looking straight ahead, and not speaking the rest of the way home.

The car's radio never worked again and Aimee, no matter what she tried, could not get Doug to talk of that July night. If she, or another person, brought up the topic, Doug would go white, as if ill. Sometimes he would change the subject. More often he would leave the room without saying a word.

Like "Aimee" and "Doug," huge numbers of people claim to have encountered similar phenomena over the past half century. Many have authored books and given lectures that number in the thousands. Throughout the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, these writers described countless UFO sightings. Some reported nothing more than strange glowing lights. Others saw metallic disks in the bright sunshine. Still others tried to convince the public that they had met the pilots of the saucers and that the people from space had given them rides.

The first large wave of flying saucer sightings coincided with the early years of the Cold War, and that conflict had a marked effect on the early years of UFO sightings. The sightings provided, for example, a platform for discussions of the uses of atomic

energy and other new technologies. Saucer believers and non-believers speculated that the objects might be American secret weapons, or Soviet secret weapons. One contemporary theory was that “disk- and cigar-shaped flying saucers” were the government’s ultra-secret means of “decontamination” of the Earth’s atmosphere, which the military had contaminated with countless atomic weapons tests.² The explanation that gained the most popular acceptance, however, was that the mysterious objects in the sky were highly advanced spacecraft from an alien civilization.

While a relatively small number of people wrote major books on the flying saucer mystery, major magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* debated the origin of the UFOs and the major authors often found themselves defending their views on national television programs. From 1947 to 1969, the question of flying saucers was a continual presence in the popular media of the United States. For many in the press, the topic existed on a blurred line between news and entertainment. One day would see a seriously worded piece on U.S. Air Force reactions to the latest sightings. The next day’s edition would contain a back page story (complete with photograph) of individuals like Andy Sinatra—the Cosmic Barber—who single-handedly saved United Nations headquarters from being demolished by malevolent space beings using only the power of his mind and a tin-foil hat.³

Despite the easily disproved claims of many UFO experiencers, the controversy over their claims persisted throughout the Cold War and has continued up to the present day. UFO belief has never, however, existed simply as a monolithic system with one commonly accepted orthodoxy. Believers advanced many different theories about the

² James W. Moseley and Karl T. Pflock, *Shockingly Close to the Truth! Confessions of a Grave-*

origin and purpose of the mysterious craft. The adherents of these different strands of UFO belief often attacked each other in print or on the lecture circuit. Did the saucers originate in our solar system or from another? Would the occupants be human in appearance or horrible monsters? Were the aliens friendly or belligerent? Some believers held that the answer to the question of extraterrestrial life lay in the hands of scientists. Others believed that the solution would prove more esoteric and spiritual than material and scientific. Despite the differing opinions amongst believers during between 1947 and 1970, common threads run through them all.

UFO belief was not, of course, universal. While the question of the UFOs' reality did appear in numerous popular media outlets, the topic had little lasting effect on the majority of Americans. A small core of true believers, however, used the possibility of extraterrestrial visitation to push forward a political and social discourse that challenged many aspects of Cold War America. The years after the Second World War brought many changes to the United States. Enormous technological and economic advancement was balanced with the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Many Americans lived more affluent lives than ever before. Inflation was down and unemployment was low. With this new economic power, came the belief that the government could sustain the country's prosperity by encouraging increased consumer spending. Contrasting with this newfound economic freedom for many Americans were increasing restrictions on the range of political thoughts and opinions that they could express. The threat of Soviet Communist expansion led to incredible scrutiny of Americans' political beliefs with government authorities searching for any hint of leftist sympathies. It was within this

context that some UFO believers addressed the need for change in three broad aspects of American society.⁴

The first aspect that UFO believers addressed was that of societal change. The danger of growing materialism and threat of nuclear conflict were the most prevalent of these concerns. All of the major UFO writers, to some degree, expressed hope that the possibility of life on other worlds would encourage Americans to look outside their confined, suburban world and embrace the possibility of—on one level—extraterrestrial visitation and—on another—the possibility of changing for the better American society and culture. Their concerns went beyond that of proving the existence of flying saucers. Rather, many wished to effect lasting, significant change.

UFO writers also expressed concern with what they saw as the increasing secrecy in government, particularly with regard to national security matters. Although accusations of vast, overarching governmental conspiracies would not become the focal point of UFO belief until the 1980s, UFO writers of the 1950s and 1960s called for governmental openness on the question of flying saucers. Believers of all stripes held that the government knew more than it was saying about the phenomenon. This pointed to a chink in the armor of a united American front during the Cold War and provided for the possibility of criticizing other aspects of governmental policy.

In incredibly varied ways, the most prolific of UFO writers and researchers during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s used their outrageous, largely un-provable tales of flying

³ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

⁴ Michael Shaller, et al, *Present Tense: The United States Since 1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 92-122.

discs to make important statements about the nature of Cold War America. These statements addressed the era's growing emphasis on the virtues of a rampant consumer culture, the dangers of the nuclear arms race and atomic brinksmanship on the part of the U.S. and U.S.S.R., and concern over the nation's scientific endeavors being mainly focused on building new and more destructive atomic weapons systems. The manner in which UFO believers expressed their dissatisfaction with these fundamental aspects of Cold War America is an important, but little studied, category of Cold War dissent. The number of articles, television, and radio specials produced during this time ensured that the question reached most Americans. Far from being "puff-pieces" about an easily dismissible fad, saucer stories questioned fundamental premises underlying Cold War American society. Economic development, material consumption, the arms race, and the growing national security structure all fell under the magnifying glass of saucer believers.

The Scholars' Approach: Culture and Thought

Scholars have examined the Cold War years of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s in extraordinary detail. Numerous political changes throughout the world—especially the division of the world's nations into two competing spheres of influence led by the United States and the Soviet Union—prompted wide-reaching changes in American culture and intellectual life. The economic, political, and social changes spawned by the end of the Second World War, however, unsettled the American people. American politics and culture evolved throughout the Cold War. Despite an initial burst of liberal, progressive government action immediately after the Second World War, a conservative retrenchment came with the growing Cold War with the Soviet Union. As the Cold War wore on, American politics and culture changed. The space race began in the late '50s,

providing a more benign cousin to the arms race. This Cold War world existed on a taut wire: events such as the U-2 espionage incident, the rise of soviet-controlled regimes in eastern Europe, and the development of the hydrogen bomb all threatened to turn up the Cold War thermostat, leading to armed conflicts. The manner in which Americans responded to the pressures of the Cold War changed as they came to terms with the new order.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the American people struggled to understand the meaning of the new age of technology that offered both vast destructive power and the promise of a future that, economically, surpassed any nation on Earth. Historian Paul Boyer examines this transition from fighting in a life and death struggle between democracy and fascism to a world where the United States is the only superpower. He asks, "How does a people react when the entire basis of its existence is fundamentally altered?" Boyer argues that the discussions and debates over newly emergent nuclear technology were not confined to the intellectual and scientific elite. On the contrary, debate over nuclear power and weapons permeated American culture and discourse. The language of the atomic age began to appear in the nomenclature of everyday items. Children played with "atomic" decoder rings and middle-class American came to embrace the concept of the "nuclear" family. Reorganization at high levels of government reflected the realities of this new age. The federal government undertook the greatest reorganization ever of the national defense structure. They created new agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency, acknowledging that the advent of the atomic age had changed the way the government carried out its work of national security. In the scientific realm, too, reorganization took

place. While many top scientists took work with the government, developing newer and more power weapons, other scientists banded together to demand that control of atomic energy and weapons be put under the umbrella of an international regulatory agency. These demands, made at a time of international tension, brought into question the political loyalty of these scientists.⁵ It was during these years that the first saucer sighting appeared in the national press. The advent of flying saucer helps answer Boyer's question. Historians' treatments of Cold War America rarely mention the phenomenon, however. When historians have discussed the question of UFO belief, they often dismiss it as a byproduct of fears and tensions brought on by the threat of nuclear exchange.⁶

On a superficial level, one could apply that explanation to the Contactees of the 1950s and 1960s. They often claimed that concern over escalating nuclear development was the reason saucers began visiting Earth. Such an approach, however, ignores the earlier activities and writings of the Contactees, particularly George Adamski. Although the Contactees receive the most play from historians as the epitome of saucer belief during the Cold War, many other forms of the belief existed. Boyer's discussion of American response to the Atomic Age, although lacking any mention of flying saucers or their proponents, provides a valuable template for analyzing American saucer beliefs from the same era. Throughout the early Cold War years, a common motif was the attempt to predict what technological advancements would come in the future. From the world of tomorrow at Disneyland and an increasing interest in science fiction in movies

⁵Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Consciousness at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 265.

⁶J. Ronald Oakley, *God's Country: America in the Fifties* (New York: Dembner Books, 1986), 364-365.

and television to the advent of the jet engine, many Americans looked to the future as a technological utopia. Flying saucers possessed futuristic, advanced technology but at the same time, that technology appeared attainable. Humanity might someday build craft like these. Flying saucer belief—through its utilization of a technological medium for its message—fits well with Boyer’s discussion.

A common theme running through the different strands of saucer belief during the Cold War was dissatisfaction with several aspects of American society and government. This connects saucer believers to a different set of Cold War analyses. W. T. Lhamon Jr., in *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s*, examines such diverse aspects of 1950s culture as the writings of Jack Kerouac and Thomas Pynchon, the art of Jackson Pollack, and the music of Little Richard and Thelonious Monk as being of a piece in terms of their effect on the culture of the 1950s. He argues that, “They became a set of strategies for cultural action.”⁷ These artists and writers did not fit the mold of the dominant middle-class white culture. Thus, as outsiders, they were in a position to critique that culture. Some were outsiders by virtue of their race; others chose to withdraw from the dominant culture in order to critique its values. To the selection of artists, novelists, musicians and poets discussed by Lhamon, one could add flying saucer believers. Some believers were outsiders throughout their lives. Others left behind conventional careers to pursue the question of the saucers. Whatever their different backgrounds, from the most outrageous claims of the Contactees to the most conservative theories of “scientific” saucer researchers, one detects a desire

⁷W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s*, (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), xiv.

for a change in priorities, away from the competition and materialism that prevailed in the United States.

Dissent, however close to the surface it might have been, largely remained hidden behind what Alan Brinkley calls an illusion of unity⁸. According to Brinkley, this illusion grew from the tremendous economic success of the United States in the post-war years. This enormous financial power, combined with military strength and ideological fervor in the face of perceived Soviet aggression, provided Americans with a sense of purpose and of superiority that overshadowed social or cultural criticisms. With this superiority, bolstered by the appearance of solidarity on the part of the American people, it appeared that Americans would not only prevail against the Communist threat, but also have the ability to solve social problems at home. Like the artists, musicians and writers addressed by Lhamon, Brinkley points to intellectuals like Archibald Macleish and the sociologist C. Wright Mills as staunch critics of the middle class suburban veneer presented as a unified “America.” And just as was the case with Lhamon’s discussion, many saucer believers would fit this analysis.⁹ While Lhamon and Brinkley do not discuss flying saucer believers, their analytical approach and basic argument apply to the UFO phenomenon. While most saucer writers were assuredly non-intellectual, they were outsiders.

Margot A. Henriksen, in *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, focuses on “the often quieter and less visible development of the atomic age culture of dissent” which arose in the 1950s rather than the more visible aspects of Cold

⁸Alan Brinkley, “The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture” in Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, ed., *Rethinking Cold War Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 62.

⁹*Ibid.*, 70-71.

War culture.¹⁰ Examining such things as films, youth crime and violence, and the bomb shelter craze, she uncovers a schismatic America suffering from juvenile delinquency at the same time that its television programs presented “idealized representations of the forces of law and order,” and supporting a government that relied on informers to “name names” before HUAC while celebrating Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible* which “honor[ed] individual conscience against mass hysteria.”¹¹ This depiction of a schizoid America helps explain both the presence of and ambivalence toward UFO believers. For many, their apprehension over the changing world and the threat of nuclear war was mingled with hope that humanity had within itself the means of rising above destruction.

As the 1960s dawned, American thought and culture shifted again and, according to Howard Brick, the result was “an age of contradiction.” Intellectuals of the 60s, recalling the brief flare of optimism that occurred at the end of the Second World War, “approached the coming decade . . . as a chance to realize far-reaching goals of social progress.”¹² As the 60s progressed, the New Left asserted itself after the conservatism of the 50s. The youth and Civil Rights movements protested, sometimes violently, against the policies of a national government that they viewed as existing only to protect the rights of the privileged. With the ascension of Richard Nixon to the presidency in 1968, contradiction reasserted itself, signaling, “a conservative trend [while] liberal and radical forces had not yet lost their energy.” Despite this final reversion, Brick considers the late 60s as “the acme of reform ideology in modern America.”¹³

¹⁰Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), x.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 69.

¹²Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), xii.

¹³*Ibid.*, 185.

One can see parallels between the reform minded spirit of the 1960s and the actions of saucer believers during the same time. The 1960s saw increased efforts to get the federal government involved in saucer research. The same contradictions discussed by Brick played out in the story of the flying saucers. Government was more open during the 1960s than it was during the 1950s. At the same time, many believers began to present saucer research on more scientific, rational lines. They held out hope that a scientific approach combined with the cooperation of an activist government would solve the mystery of the saucers.

While most historians of the Cold War have not discussed UFO belief, they have laid extensive groundwork explicating the social, cultural, and political context in which the flying saucer movement existed. They have also chronicled and analyzed the development of similar dissenting voices of the time. The few historians who have undertaken the task of chronicling the development of saucer belief in the United States have generally followed one of two paths. The first is to focus on the political and military aspects of saucer belief. This approach, while admirably analyzing and explicating the role of the military in the question of flying saucer research, tends to minimize smaller fringe groups, especially Contactees and their followers. The second path is less analytical than critical. Authors who choose this path argue that saucer belief was a fear-reaction to the changing America of the Cold War years. While this argument is quite tenable, to focus exclusively on this ignores the pro-active steps believers took to improve their nation and world.

David M. Jacobs, in *The UFO Controversy in America*, chooses the first path, focusing on the conflict between the political/military infrastructure that sought to

monopolize research into unexplained aerial phenomena and the large, national saucer investigation groups (particular Donald Keyhoe's National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomenon), which sought cooperation between government and civil research efforts.¹⁴ Jacobs also extensively documents NICAP's quest for open congressional hearings into the question of the saucers. Jacobs's work is more narrative than analytical but the topics upon which he concentrates clearly indicate that he considers scientific and political approaches to the saucer question much more worthy of analysis than other types. Jacobs deftly describes the motivations, goals, and results of NICAP's quest for government and scientific validation of their saucer beliefs. By almost ignoring other types of saucer beliefs, however, Jacobs misses the opportunity to explore the ways in which different strands of saucer belief intertwined.

Unlike Jacobs, Curtis Peebles in *Watch the Skies! A Chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth* and Brenda Denzler in *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* both encompass all aspects of saucer belief from political and scientific to religious interpretations of the phenomenon. Unfortunately, while both authors explore the broad spectrum of saucer belief, they come to very narrow conclusions. Peebles dismisses the convictions of UFO believers as "a mirror to the events of postwar America—the paranoia of the 1950s, the social turmoil of the 1960s, the "me generation" of the 1970s and the nihilism of the 1980s and the early 1990s."¹⁵ Denzler explores the relationship between UFO belief, science, and religion, concluding "at every turn science leaves humanity essentially alone in the universe. The UFO

¹⁴David M. Jacobs, *The UFO Controversy in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 1-5.

¹⁵Curtis Peebles, *Watch the Skies! A Chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), x.

movement, however . . . suggest[s] that not only are we not alone but we have been and can be and are in contact with alien forms of intelligent life.” UFO belief, for him, is a middle ground between the barrenness of science and the mysticism of religion.¹⁶

Thus, both Peebles and Denzler remove from saucer believers a great deal of agency. To Peebles, believers are simply the product of their environment, their convictions a reflection of the world around them. For Denzler, UFO belief is an internal coping mechanism, concocted by those unable to deal with either science or religion. Both authors fail to consider the possibility that saucer belief was not a simply reaction to or escape from reality, but that it could be a medium through which its adherents could convey a desire for fundamental change in American society. Cultural theorists have thought more fruitfully about UFO belief over the past 20 years. These works focus largely on the conspiracy theory and paranoia aspects of modern UFO belief. Although overarching conspiracy theory did not become the focus of UFO theories until the 1980s, there exists in the beliefs of Cold War saucerdom a faint undercurrent of conspiracy and cover-up on the part of the United States government. Thus, some of these researchers’ ideas prove useful to an examination of saucer belief during the 1950s and 60s.

Jodi Dean, in her 1998 book *Aliens In America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace*, examines the presence of “aliens in everyday life”. Rather than provide a close examination of UFO beliefs, Dean focuses on popular images of aliens, popular presentations of alien abduction, and conspiracy tales that have escaped the UFO subculture and have subsequently presented themselves as cultural artifacts in 20th century American society. Dean examines the connections between these “cultural

¹⁶Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of*

artifacts and social and political life.”¹⁷ She does not, however, deal extensively with the 1940s through the 1960s, focusing instead on current cultural expressions of “UFOlogy.”

In her treatment of UFO culture during the Cold War, she does say that “in the 1950s and 1960s . . . [UFOlogy] was doing something; it wasn’t just spinning an outlandish conspiracy tale.” Rather, it was using the “conspiracy tale” of government efforts to hide the “truth” about flying saucers to challenge military and scientific hegemony.¹⁸ Thus, Dean’s analysis of saucer conspiracies grants saucer believers significant agency in their attempts to change the world around them but leaves developing an analysis of the 1950s and ‘60s to others.

Peter Knight and Timothy Melley have both explored the nature and meaning of paranoia in postwar America. Melley argues that writers use conspiracy theories to “represent the influence of postwar technologies, social organizations and communications systems on human beings.” and that these theories “are symptoms of a more pervasive anxiety about social control.”¹⁹ But attempts at social control certainly existed during the 1950s and 60s, enforcing a vision of a unified nation, bound together by a veneer of upper-middle class consumerism. Saucer believers, particularly the Contactees, rebelled against these attempts at control. Peter Knight explains “conspiracy theories have traditionally functioned either to bolster a sense of an ‘us’ threatened by a sinister ‘them,’ or to justify the scapegoating of often blameless victims.”²⁰ Saucer

UFOs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 159.

¹⁷Jodi Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹Timothy Melley, *Empire of Conspiracy: The Culture of Paranoia in Postwar America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), vii.

²⁰Peter Knight, *Conspiracy Culture: From Kennedy to the X-Files* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.

believers of all stripes often felt that the escalating Cold War promoted a false dichotomy that would disappear if the saucers proved to be real. The end of the Cold War conflict would strip the governments of the world with their reason for stockpiling weapons and promoting fear of the other side in the conflict. When the conspiracy is focused on keeping secrets (such as the truth behind the flying saucers), those trying to expose the secrets become noble, heroically bringing the truth to a populous that had been misled. Scholars who study conspiracy theory ask the question that I want to ask of saucer believers in the '50s and '60s: to what extent did these beliefs help their holders cope with a situation they felt was out of control? Like the conspiracy theorists discussed by Melley, Knight, and Dean, UFO believers of the 1950s and 1960s used their ideas to explain aspects of their world that were otherwise inexplicable. While writers on contemporary conspiracy theories often insist that their subjects' views result from those individuals being alienated from mainstream society, I contend that during the early Cold War saucer believers sought to use the issue of UFOs to effect change and initiate discourse from within American society.

Beyond intellectual histories of the Cold War, narrowly focused UFO histories, and the writings of cultural critics on conspiracy theory, historians of science also provide a fertile background for exploring the meaning of saucer belief in Cold War America. Saucer believers and UFO advocates often questioned American uses of new scientific knowledge and argued that scientists should focus their advances toward more peaceful ends. Historians in recent years have examined the role of science and scientists in the Cold War, and the absorption of science by the American national defense culture. Boyer's *By the Bomb's Early Light*, Stuart W. Leslie's *The Cold War and American*

Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford, and Jessica Wang's *American Scientists in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism, and the Cold War* provide three different perspectives on the impact science and Cold War politics had upon each other.

Boyer traces what he considers to be a political agenda held by nuclear scientists. He attributes this agenda to the fact that “many scientists concluded after August 6, 1945, that it was their urgent duty to try to shape official policy regarding atomic energy.”²¹ The most urgent of their requests was the creation of an international authority to control nuclear material and even—in the case of such visionaries as Leo Szilard, Eugene Rabinowich and even Albert Einstein—the creation of a worldwide government that would supplant nation-states; a goal also advocated by some UFO believers. Thus the goals and aims of some believers arose within a previously established context of political change. The saucer believers did not exist in an ideological vacuum. Rather, they appended UFO beliefs onto political causes in which they believed.

Though Jessica Wang deals with the same time period and many of the same individuals, she does not discuss the push for world government. Rather, Wang approaches the problem of the growing anticommunist feeling in the U.S. from 1945 to 1955 and the ways that those sentiments affected scientists of the era. Wang argues that through their inadequate response to the rabid anticommunism of the time, the American scientific establishment effectively changed the nature of American science. “Domestic anticommunism did more than interfere with individual scientists’ lives,” Wang argues,

²¹Boyer, 49.

“it affected the entire scientific enterprise.”²² Many saucer believers believed that, for many different reasons, science had become ideological rather than open-minded. While not referencing the anticommunist movement, saucer researchers in the 1950s and 60s had indeed been co-opted and adhered to a party line rather than form their own opinions about new phenomena.

Stuart Leslie examines the relationship between government and scientific institutions. Leslie argues that the linking of MIT and Stanford to the national defense structure through patronage work and research grants resulted in “academic programs and corporate products so skewed toward the cutting-edge performance of military technology that they had nothing to give to the civilian economy.”²³ Many flying saucer believers of the same era shared these feelings. Their desires for alternative scientific advances ranged from medical treatments to American-made flying saucers for exploring the solar system. The examination of the growing governmental influence in science provides valuable insights into the changing nature of the American government during the Cold War and that government’s relationship with traditionally civilian areas of society. Saucer believers focused upon these changes in government in their writings, indicating a desire for change. The works of Boyer, Wang, and Leslie aids our understanding of saucer believers because they explain, in many cases, their own perspectives on the relationship between science and the government.

A final category of analysis relating to UFO belief in the Cold War is that of science fiction in general and utopian/dystopian fiction in particular. While not

²²Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 3.

²³Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 3.

ostensibly writers of fiction, UFO believers often expressed into utopian and dystopian themes in their writings. The Contactees, for example, would discuss the wonders of life on Venus and praising the Venusians' technological and spiritual advancement.

Following that, as a counterpoint, they would lament that the peoples of earth were not as advanced. They then often predicted certain atomic destruction if humanity did not change its ways. Analysis of science fiction and utopian/dystopian writing provides useful models for interpreting the writing of flying saucer Contactees.

Tom Moylan observes that dystopian narratives are “largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of . . . war . . . provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination.” Dystopia is not, however, merely an “anti-utopia.” Rather, a dystopian storyline often “develops around [an] alienated protagonist.”²⁴ Another shared feature of saucer narratives and science fiction more generally is the prevalence of travel narratives.²⁵ This similarity is especially strong when considering the works of those Contactees who claimed to have traveled on flying saucers. Their journeys had a twofold purpose. First, they enabled the experiencer to escape what they saw as a world that was inadequate. Second, the saucer experience gave the believer a medium within which to hide messages promoting society and culture change.

Any discussion of flying saucers necessarily brings to mind the long history of astrological omens, their religious interpretations and the effect of these on society and culture, especially at the turns of centuries or during times of war. While scholars of

²⁴Tom Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), xi,xiii.

²⁵John J. Pierce, *Foundations of Science Fiction: A Study in Imagination and Evolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 11-14.

religion and spirituality have explored cults that integrated flying saucer belief in their worldviews, these investigations deal almost exclusively with the Contactees of the 1950s and '60s and their descendents, the UFO cults of the 1970s. While an examination of the spiritual beliefs of the Contactees is important, it is outside the scope of this study. Rather than focus so deeply on one component of saucer belief, I aim to explore the relationship between different areas of those beliefs.

Conspiracy theory, science, and science fiction all appear, on the surface, to be natural cognates of the UFO phenomenon. The study of those who not only professed belief in flying saucers, but also devoted their lives to evangelizing their views to people around the world, is remarkably interdisciplinary. From the starting point of the flying saucers, one can discuss military policy, the changing organizational structure of the U.S. government, popular culture, the use of media, and myriad other topics. While it proves tempting and all too easy to get caught up in the entertaining and often humorous accounts of the believers, one must always bear in mind that these writers were doing much more than telling America about the spacemen. They talked about the space beings so they could talk about earth beings. They pointed out the wonders of Venus to point out the deficiencies of Earth. In doing this, they revealed much about the Cold War's impact on government, society, and science.

Flying saucer belief during the Cold War, though comprised of differing and often contradictory theories, consistently sought to bring about lasting change in American society, culture, politics and science. The Contactees wrote tales of travels and conversations with otherworldly beings who had humanity's best interests at heart. Their messages, if adhered to, had the potential to transform Earth into a peaceful paradise.

Other saucer believers and researchers claimed no contact with the machines or their operators. These individuals and the organizations they formed simply wanted the truth about the strange devices in the sky. Many were convinced that the United States government knew more than it was telling about the strange lights and vehicles in the sky. For the truth to be known the government would have to lower the walls of secrecy they had built since the advent of the Cold War. All these groups and individuals, regardless of their views on the saucers, had serious messages for the American people and government.

Chapter Two

“I discovered a general interest in saucers keener than I had imagined”
The Flying Saucer Phenomenon: 1947-1970¹

Throughout the 1940s, ‘50s, and ‘60s believers and skeptics alike carried on the flying saucer debate in very public forums. In addition to coverage from flying saucer clubs, local newsletters, and pulp magazines devoted to the question, many mainstream publications such as *Time*, *Life*, and *Look* also gave extensive coverage to the topic. A brief overview of the major turning points in the flying saucer phenomenon in Cold War America provides a valuable look at the ways in which different kinds of saucer beliefs and debates changed over time. Between 1947 and 1970, flying saucer beliefs became more diverse: there was no one explanation for what the saucers were, where they came from, and what their purpose was. The people involved in saucer research during this time went to great lengths to promulgate their various views of what was happening in the skies above the United States. In doing so, they also sought to spread their beliefs about aspects of American which they felt needed reform or improvement.

The differences between strands of saucer belief and the ways in which these beliefs developed demonstrate that as the 1950s and ‘60s wore on, saucer believers refined their arguments into forms that would have the most impact on the public. These developments culminated in a major government-funded scientific investigation into the validity of saucer claims. Ironically, this proved to be the undoing of the saucer movement in the United States. The investigations and debates of the saucer believers

¹ I am using the terms “flying saucer”, “saucer belief” and “saucer mystery” rather than the more commonly accepted term UFO. My reasoning for this is that, during the 1950s and 1960s, “Flying Saucer” was the term used most extensively (if not exclusively) among believers. By its very nature, “UFO” connotes a sense of uncertainty, of doubt, and of reasonably scientific investigation. Very few true believers felt any uncertainty of doubt. What they saw were saucers, which probably originated on another planet. For most believers, the craft were not unidentified.

did not, however, occur in a vacuum. The actions of the American military establishment, particularly the Air Force, served to fuel speculation about the nature of the saucer phenomenon thus feeding the saucer believers' views and giving them longevity.

Most UFO researchers, if pressed for an actual start-date for flying saucer fanaticism in the United States, will point to June 24, 1947. On this day, Idaho businessman Kenneth Arnold was flying a private plane from Chehalis to Yakima, Washington. Arnold claimed, as he flew toward Mount Rainier, that he saw, "a chain of nine peculiar looking aircraft flying from north to south at approximately 9,500 feet elevation and going, seemingly, in a definite direction of about 170 degrees." Since the local FBI office was closed, Arnold reported his sighting instead to the *East Oregonian* newspaper. The story found its way to the Associated Press news wire. Within days, the story of the strange objects that "flew like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water" flashed across headlines throughout the United States.² Though some had claimed to see unexplained aerial phenomena before this date, June 14, 1947 marked the beginning of the United States' popular reaction to and interaction with those who made claims of encountering these phenomena.

The remainder of the summer of 1947 carried with it a number of further "flying disk" claims from witnesses such as police officers, harbor patrolmen, and airline pilots. Subsequent to the first few instances of unexplained activity, the Army Air Force (AAF) issued a statement denying that any of their current projects were responsible for

² Brad Steiger, ed. *Project Blue Book* (New York: Ballentine, 1976), 26-36.

sightings and that the sightings that had been reported did not warrant investigation. This attitude would quickly change. In July of 1947, several AAF pilots allegedly chased unidentifiable disk-shaped aircraft and proved unable to match their speed or maneuverability. The experiences of these pilots caused concern in the upper echelons of the AAF.

At the Technical Intelligence Division of Air Materiel Command, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio, opinion was split as to the origins of the strange craft. One leading theory was that the craft were extraterrestrial, piloted by beings from another planet. The second theory was that they were experimental craft developed by the Soviet Union and secretly being tested in the United States. Since the U. S. Navy had also been developing a disk-shaped aircraft (the XF5U-1), this explanation seemed the most plausible and by the end of 1947, it had become the prevailing opinion of the AAF.³

By the end of the summer of 1947, the Pentagon had reorganized the AAF into the independent U. S. Air Force. Along with this change came the institution of project Sign. Sign was a permanent flying saucer investigation program with orders to “collect, collate, evaluate, and distribute to interested government agencies and contractors all information concerning sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere which can be construed to be of concern to the national security.”⁴ With Sign in place, the USAF took official, concerted action on the question of flying saucers.

Throughout 1948, saucer sightings continued. The most spectacular event

³ Curtis Peebles, *Watch The Skies! A Chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 12.

⁴ David Jacobs. *The UFO Controversy in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975) 270.

occurred in January of that year. On the 7th, Thomas F. Mantell, Jr., a captain in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 165th Fighter Squadron, was flying from Marietta, Georgia to Standiford Air Force Base in Kentucky. As Mantell and his three wingmen approached Standiford in their F-51D fighters, they spotted an immense metallic object that did not resemble any aircraft with which they were familiar. The four fighters pursued the object but as they approached 25,000 feet, all of them broke off except Mantell. Mantell continued pursuing the object until he ran out of oxygen. His fighter went into a sharp dive and crashed on a farm in Franklin, Kentucky. Although Air Force officials found no evidence that the crash was anything more than an accident, the Louisville *Courier* dramatized the story with the headline "F-51 and Capt. Mantell Destroyed Chasing Flying Saucer."⁵

The sensationalist headlines introduced the idea that saucers might not only be interacting with humanity but also might prove dangerous. It also indicated to the public that the American military had an interest in discovering the identity of the visitors. After the Mantell incident, Sign personnel began to view saucers as an extraterrestrial phenomenon and issued an "Estimate of the Situation" which concluded that the flying saucers were real and that they came from outer space. USAF Chief of Staff Hoyt S. Vandenberg rejected this estimate. He did not think that the evidence gathered by the Air Force justified such a radical explanation.⁶ This verdict somewhat deflated the members of Sign, who felt they no longer had any real incentive to rigorously investigate saucer reports. Vandenberg ordered that the USAF saucer project to shift to a more scientific

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Edward J. Ruppelt. *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 41-25. Ruppelt was an Air Force officer who, for a time, was in command of Project Blue Book

basis, with an emphasis on explaining sightings in terms that could be easily conveyed to the public.

According to J. Allen Hynek, scientific advisor to project Sign, the Air Force now “entered upon a long period of unfortunate, amateurish public relations. The issuance of propaganda and public relations handouts, which were often ill-considered and contradictory, ushered in an era of confusion from 1950-1970.” Hynek would remain the Air Force’s advisor on UFO matters from 1947 through 1969. He summed up what he saw as the Air Force’s flawed handling of the saucer situation with one question: “if there was nothing whatever to the UFO phenomenon other than misperceptions, hoaxes, etc., why continue a UFO program?”⁷

The USAF changed the name of project Sign to project Grudge on February 11, 1949. There exists no firm reason for the name change. One explanation was that the name “Sign” had been compromised in someway, which necessitated the name change for security reasons.⁸ The changeover to the new name was so subtle that USAF officials did not see a need to inform even their scientific advisor. Hynek stated that “code names were not supposed to have any special significance” but he also reported “The change to Project Grudge signaled the adoption of the strict brush-off attitude to the UFO problem. Now the public relations statements on specific UFO cases bore little resemblance to the facts of the case.”⁹ The Air Force dismissed complex cases with simple explanations. For example, multiple lights, moving at high speed in different directions were explained

(the organizational successor to Projects Sign and Grudge). His account provides valuable “insider” knowledge of USAF procedure and attitudes of the time.

⁷ J. Allen Hynek. *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1998) 173.

⁸ Tim Printy. “Project Grudge” (<http://members.aol.com/TPrinty/Grudge.html>: 2001) 1.

⁹ Hynek, 1, 174.

away as being a sighting of the planet Venus.¹⁰ This growing disparity between the sightings reported to the USAF and their subsequent explanations of those sightings led to the growth of civilian saucer research organizations.

These changes encompassed both the way that saucer believers presented their views and the ways in which American society and government accepted these views. Three major developments occurred: increased government scrutiny, increased reports of UFO sightings which often got attention in the popular press, and the advent of a group of UFO experiencers known as Contactees. These years also began to see a splintering of saucer belief into different factions. Each of these factions had different explanations for sightings and wildly divergent interpretations of their meaning. By the end of the 1960s, flying saucer belief had grown in both scale and complexity.

Government response to the saucer question escalated during the 1950s and 1960s. One manifestation of this was the changeover, in the summer of 1951, of project Grudge to project Blue Book. Blue Book would be the primary means by which the government and military dealt with the saucer phenomenon until 1969. Although faced with a similar mission as Sign and Grudge, the USAF wanted Blue Book to provide more solid explanations of saucer sightings and events. They wanted the solution to the flying saucer question to be mundane and attributable to natural phenomenon.

A prime example of this occurred in 1966. Two sheriff's deputies in eastern Ohio spotted a strange object in the night sky. They pursued it over 60 miles into western Pennsylvania. Other witnesses in Pennsylvania also saw the object. When the witnesses reported their sighting to the Air Force, they received a perfunctory five-minute

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

telephone interview. The commander of Blue Book at the time, Major Hector Quintanilla, dismissed the sighting as being a particularly bright satellite. The witnesses, believing that the Air Force was not taking their claims seriously, contacted their members of Congress. The Congressmen put pressure on Quintanilla to come up with a more convincing explanation. This time, Quintanilla traveled to Ravenna, Ohio to interview the witnesses in person. The final explanation arrived at by the Air Force was that the witnesses had seen and pursued the planet Venus, even though the witnesses clearly stated that they saw Venus in addition to the mysterious object.¹¹

The Blue Book reports and explanations gained credibility with the press and the public largely due to the efforts of Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Blue Book's scientific advisor. His calm, soft-spoken appearances on radio and television programs lent an air of rational assurance to the Air Force explanations of sightings.¹² He seemed to acknowledge that a genuine mystery or important discovery might lie at the heart of the sightings. Unfortunately, due to the volume of cases and the USAF's pressure to provide an explanation, Hynek was never able to investigate sightings deeply enough to know for sure if anything might be behind them.¹³

Increased sightings, especially in 1952, led to increased government scrutiny of the mystery. The summer of that year saw Blue Book personnel inundated with sightings from all over the country, including a so-called "Saucer-fly-over" of Washington, D. C. which radar operators were powerless to explain. As mysterious lights flashed in the night over the Pentagon, White House, and Capitol Hill, the Air Force scrambled fighters

¹¹ Hynek, 100-107.

¹² Peebles, 21-22.

¹³ Hynek, 108.

to intercept. By the time the planes were airborne, the lights had disappeared from the skies and the radar screens.¹⁴ This incident convinced many in the government that whatever was going on, it was vital to determine whether or not there existed a threat to national security. By early 1953, one of the newest governmental creations of the Cold War would try its hand at understanding the situation.

On January 14-17, 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency convened the “Scientific Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects.” Chaired by physicist E. P. Robertson of the California Institute of Technology, the panel concluded, much like the Air Force, that there existed no evidence that “these phenomena constitute a direct physical threat to national security.” While no “physical threat” existed, the panel acknowledged “that the continued emphasis on the reporting of these phenomena does, in these parlous [sic] times result in a threat to the orderly functioning of the protective organs of the body politic.” The panel suggested that the media be used to “strip the Unidentified Flying Objects of the . . . aura of mystery they have unfortunately acquired.”¹⁵ The findings of the Robertson Panel, though initially classified and not reported to the public was significant for two reasons. First, it helped established that the government saw flying saucers as a threat—not because they were invading craft from outer space but because the public’s perception of them could derail the government efforts to convince Americans that the Soviet Union was greatest threat imaginable. Second, and more far-reaching, was the effect that the Robertson findings had on flying saucer believers when its existence was eventually leaked to the public. To many saucer believers, the report

¹⁴ Gerald K. Haynes, “A Die-Hard Issue: CIA’s Role in the Study of UFOs, 1947-90.” *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1997: 2.

¹⁵ *Report of the Scientific Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects*, January 17, 1953: 2, 3.

confirmed that the government did, despite its previous public statements, have a strong interest in flying saucers. What was more, the agency involved was not the Air Force, but the CIA: a new, secretive creation of the Cold War. Knowledge of the scrutiny given to the question of flying saucers by the military and intelligence organs of the U.S. government fueled believers' desire for governmental disclosure of any UFO information they might have had and reinforced the notion that the government was being unduly secretive about the topic.

Discussion of flying saucers was not confined to private researchers and government committees. Prominent national media outlets also posited theories and presented the views of the Air Force to the public. The prevailing approach that the national media took was to minimize and marginalize fringe views, preferring instead to focus on Air Force responses to saucer reports and on more plausible sightings. As saucers became more of a mainstream topic, however, some media outlets called into question the honesty and thoroughness of Air Force investigations. A useful point of comparison is the treatment given the saucer question by *Life* magazine at two key points in the saucer story. These two stories not only demonstrate the attention that the national press paid to saucer sightings but also illustrate the degree to which the focus of coverage changed between 1947 and 1952.

The first is a short article in the July 21, 1947 issue of *Life*, shortly after Kenneth Arnold's initial saucer sighting. The article recaps the Arnold sighting, and mentions a few others that happened during that first "UFO wave." The article then segues into various theories of the saucers' origins. For example, "San Franciscan Ole J. Sneide, explained that the saucers were sent out by 'The Great Master' who left earth in disks

after the fall of the Roman Empire and now resides on the dark side of the Moon.”

Another explanation came from Boris Artzybasheff who opined that “obviously the residents of the planet Neptune, having attained a civilization far in advance of what is now enjoyed on earth, are shelling the universe with crockery saucers.”¹⁶

While the 1947 article was less than a page long and largely dismissive of saucer sightings and their proponents, *Life*’s April 7, 1952 article entitled “Have We Visitors From Space?” took the subject much more seriously. The focus of this article was the Air Force’s new initiative to investigate saucer sightings.¹⁷ Whereas the earlier article was distinctly tongue-in-cheek, this article had a darker tone. Contributing to this tone was the relation of the Captain Mantell’s fighter crash while pursuing a perceived flying saucer, and other frightening encounters with saucers that either resulted—or easily could have resulted—in loss of life. The *Life* reporter also criticizes previous Air Force investigations into the phenomenon:

These occurrences, jarring though they must have been to the participants, left the official calm of the Air Force unruffled. The operations set up to investigate the saucers . . . seemed to have been fashioned more as a sedative to public controversy than as a serious inquiry into the facts.¹⁸

Thus, in the 1952 article, *Life*’s writer acknowledged that a mystery existed, that it was possibly threatening, and that the government had not taken the proactive role that the mystery demanded.

¹⁶ “Speaking Pictures . . . A Rash of Flying Saucers Breaks Out Over the Country,” *Life* July 21, 1947: 14.

¹⁷ Given the date of the article, and given that Project Grudge is referred to by name, it’s reasonable to assume that the outline of new USAF policy in the article refers to Project Blue Book, even though that name had not yet been made public.

¹⁸ “Have We Visitors From Space?” *Life*, April 7, 1952: 82.

Major broadcasting systems ABC and CBS also looked at the new flying saucer phenomenon in the late 1940s. ABC broadcast *Search for the Flying Saucers* on July 10, 1947, only weeks after Kenneth Arnold's initial Mount Rainier sighting. This fifteen-minute program focused on the many saucer sightings that witnesses reported in the weeks following Arnold's encounter. Witnesses presented serious theories as well as humorous ones. Calling flying saucers "the biggest whosit, whatsit story of the year," narrator Walter Klernon admitted that there were, at the time, no solutions as to the origins or meaning of the saucers. They had, however, "taken our minds off of taxes, toil, and trouble for a little while, and that's not bad."¹⁹ Two years later, in May of 1949, CBS presented *Case for the Flying Saucer*, a thirty-minute program hosted by respected broadcaster Edward R. Murrow. Unlike the 1947 program, this show's tone was decidedly less whimsical. Murrow asserted, "Sane and reliable people have been involved in this flying saucer business." This was not a show about crackpots or lunatics but people to whom the audience could relate. When discussing possible origins of the saucers, the show placed a good deal of emphasis on the theory that the craft were creations of the U.S. government, generally top-secret aircraft or new types of guided missiles.²⁰ Like the articles in *Life*, these radio programs illustrate the presence flying saucers had in the late 1940s and the shift in the way the media handled them. Subsequent to their first appearances, journalists treated the subject lightly. Later articles and broadcasts treated the subject much more seriously, focusing on the reliability of the witnesses rather than more outrageous tales. In the 1950s, however, some saucer stories would appear which were too outrageous to ignore.

¹⁹ *Search for the Flying Saucers*, ABC radio, originally broadcast July 10, 1947.

²⁰ *Case for the Flying Saucers*, CBS radio, originally broadcast May 14, 1949.

In 1953, within a few months of the Robertson Panel voicing its desire to demystify the flying saucer question and amidst increased popular press coverage of the phenomenon, some enthusiasts added a new level to saucer belief. Called Contactees, their stories centered on physical and psychic encounters with the occupants of the saucers. These stories not only introduced elements of mysticism to saucer research but also lodged concrete complaints about contemporary social and political problems. The stories of the Contactees polarized saucer belief into those who accepted these tales with blind faith and those who still searched for a rational, scientific solution to the question of the saucers. Flying saucer discourse, which many had considered based—however loosely—on apolitical, conventional science would soon change drastically. Unlike many turning points in history, one individual carried almost total responsibility.

The child of Polish immigrants, George Adamski would become one of the most influential and controversial figures in flying saucer lore. Born in 1891, he traveled the United States doing odd jobs and educating himself in a number of philosophical systems, including the teachings of the Theosophical Society of Madame Helena Blavatsky. He settled in California sometime in the 1920s and founded the Royal Academy of Tibet. The Academy served as a soapbox for Adamski's teachings on the Cosmic Law and his interpretations of various Theosophical and mystical themes. According to some cynics, its main purpose was to manufacture and sell "sacramental" wine during the prohibition years.²¹

Adamski's headquarters was Palomar Gardens, a four-stool hamburger stand, where he worked as a handyman. By the end of the 1930s, Adamski's fame as a teacher

²¹ Douglas Curran, *In Advance of the Landing* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985) 43-44, 71-72.

had spread and he regularly held courses on the Cosmic (sometimes called the Universal) Law. This was Adamski's somewhat vague term for a system of beliefs centered on principles of love for one's fellow people, humility, and a rejection of materialism.

Like many others in the United States, Adamski became interested in the question of extraterrestrial life after Kenneth Arnold's 1947 sighting. While the Air Force and others approached the phenomenon from a scientific perspective, asking questions like "what are the saucers?" or "where do they come from?" Adamski's was more interest in finding out what the visitors were trying to communicate to humanity. Just as he used the vocabulary of mysticism to spread the message of his Cosmic Law in the 1930s and 40s, in the 1950s Adamski used the phenomenon of flying saucers to convey the same message. Adamski had an interest in astronomy, fed by the proximity of the Palomar Observatory to Palomar Gardens. He purchased several telescopes and began taking photographs through them. In time, he would claim that he was photographing flying saucers through the telescopes, laying the groundwork for the saucer myth through which he would promulgate the cosmic law. A turning point in Adamski's career came in 1949 when he wrote *Pioneers of Space*, a science fiction novel in which American astronauts travel to many of the planets in the solar system, interacting with humanoid space aliens and learning of their ways and philosophies. Adamski based these alien philosophies on his own Cosmic Law, using the medium of science fiction to convey his ideas. *Pioneers of Space* was a commercial flop, but in 1953 Adamski struck upon a plan to spread his philosophy and make a name for himself at the same time.

In early 1953 Adamski contacted British writer Desmond Leslie who was close to publishing a book on the saucer question. Adamski conveyed to Leslie an experience

that allegedly occurred on November 20, 1952. On that day, Adamski and several friends drove to Desert Center, California. Adamski told his friends that he had a feeling he would be able to get some very good pictures of flying saucers. The group saw several strange craft in the sky from their car. Adamski had them stop the car. He said that they should wait for him and he jogged off into the distance. After a while, he returned, saying that a flying saucer had landed. Adamski claimed that he met with the sole occupant of the saucer—a young man with flowing blond hair who was completely human in appearance. Through a combination of sign language and telepathy, Adamski determined that the saucer pilot hailed from Venus and that his saucer was only a scoutship dispatched from the mother ship, which remained high in orbit. Adamski further learned that the Venusians had grave concerns about the continued atomic testing which endangered the entire solar system. After his meeting with the Venusian, Adamski took some plaster casts of the alien's footprints, which revealed strange, undecipherable hieroglyphs. Several of Adamski's friends swore affidavits that they not only saw what appeared to be a spaceship but that they also saw Adamski speaking with someone.²²

Leslie thought the story had merit and convinced his publisher to add Adamski's account to the end of his own forthcoming book, *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. Leslie's book was a dry recitation of unexplained sightings and objects throughout history from Biblical times to the present. Adamski's unique tale of his encounter livened up the volume and almost immediately overshadowed Leslie's own work. Soon, Adamski became one of the most controversial and discussed figures in flying saucer circles.

²² Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (London: British Book Centre, 1953), 195-216.

In this way, Adamski created a new genre of flying saucer belief. The Contactees were unlike others who had been studying the saucer question in that they offered no proof, no evidence for their claims. One either believed the Contactees or one did not. They offered nothing except their stories. Once Adamski's story hit the presses, others came forward with their own tales of extraterrestrial visitors. Some, such as that of British ornithologist Cedric Allingham, resembled nothing more than a retelling of Adamski's story with Mars as the visitor's planet of origin rather than Venus. Other Contactees, such as George Hunt Williamson, claimed that extraterrestrials communicated through psychic channeling and automatic writing rather than through face-to-face contact. The Contactee movement split saucer belief. Individual researchers and organizations which were searching for physical proof of the saucers' existence and extraterrestrial origins found their efforts undermined by these upstarts who had no convincing proof and who, through their outrageous stories, threatened to discredit all of saucer research.

Despite the lack of proof offered, the Contactees enjoyed enormous popularity. And many people took their encounters as fact. Adamski would author two books on his own which built on the contact experience in *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. His 1955 book *Inside the Spaceships* dealt extensively with the beliefs and lifestyles of the various races of the solar system. Like *Pioneers of Space*, this book mirrored the philosophical beliefs that Adamski had promoted since the 1930s. After *Inside the Spaceships* was published, Adamski became the object of an extensive investigation and debunking. This would have an effect on the way in which Adamski would convey his message in the future.

Key to the debunking of Adamski was James W. Moseley, one of the most enduring figures in American saucer research. Born in 1931, Moseley was the son of a US Army general and a wealthy steamship line heiress. After dropping out of Princeton and, almost simultaneously, inheriting a large amount of money, Moseley found himself free to indulge his two great interests: pre-Columbian antiquities and the burgeoning mystery of flying saucers. He began his investigation of the phenomenon in 1953, taking a months long trek across the United States, interviewing every saucer researcher he could find. His interviews crossed the boundaries of different beliefs, and he interviewed straight-laced scientific investigators as well as the king of the Contactees, George Adamski.

Upon returning to his home in Fort Lee, New Jersey, Moseley formed an organization called S.A.U.C.E.R.S. (Saucers And Unexplained Celestial Events Research Society) and began publishing a flying saucer magazine called *Nexus* (later changed to *Saucer News*). From the very beginning, Moseley's approach was unique among saucer investigators. In the first issue, he explained the position of S.A.U.C.E.R.S:

We feel that flying saucers exist and are probably interplanetary, and we also feel that we are as serious-minded about the subject as anybody. However, we cannot persue [sic] our interest in saucers with a continued deadpan expression, and for that reason NEXUS is particularly slanted for those who, like us, can get a laugh out of a rather serious subject.²³

This is not to say that Moseley did not take the subject of saucers seriously, only that he openly acknowledged the humorous nature of some aspects of it, particularly some of the personalities involved. According to Moseley, "Saucer fans of all stripes needed a journal where they could read the latest sighting reports and insider dope,

²³ James W. Mosley and Karl T. Pflock, *Shockingly Close to the Truth! Confessions of a Grave-Robbing UFOlogist* (Amhearst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2002), 106.

trumpet their views to their associates, and enjoy a chuckle or two.”²⁴ *Nexus* filled that need. For the first fifteen years of its existence, *Nexus* and its successor *Saucer News* had a paid subscription of around 2500, higher during times of increased saucer activity.²⁵ Unlike newsstand magazines which touched on the saucer mystery such as *Fate* and *True*, Moseley aimed his subscription-only publications at an audience which already had their minds made up—one way or the other—about the nature of the saucers. Thus, the *Nexus/Saucer News* publication carried very little in the way of material that tried to persuade readers to think in one way or another about the saucers. Rather, their goal was to bridge the gap between the different strands of saucer belief in the 1950s and sixties.

Moseley’s most lasting contribution to the field of saucer investigation was an investigation that exposed many of George Adamski’s claims as outright fabrications. Moseley’s first impressions about Adamski were almost charitable. In his journal, recording his experiences interviewing Adamski, Moseley wrote:

There is a very, very small possibility that Adamski’s account is a deliberate and unscrupulous hoax; there is a much greater chance that it was a psychological or so-called ‘psychic’ experience, in which case there are two possibilities: (1) This represents a normal operation of the mind, an operation that we do not understand; (2) Adamski is crazy. There is also a good chance that Adamski may in all good faith be lying in order to expound doctrines and ideas that he sincerely feels to be true.²⁶

Moseley continued to feel that Adamski was sincere about his underlying message, if not his experiences. By 1954, however, testimony from Adamski’s witnesses in which they

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

claimed to be lying and careful analysis of Adamski's saucer photographs provided abundant proof for Moseley's exposé.

While Adamski shrugged off the efforts to debunk his claims, seemingly unaffected by the exposé, his works after 1955 had a defensive quality that not only attempted to prove his claims but also detracted from his philosophical message. His third and final book exemplified this shift in tone away from the philosophical meanderings of *Inside the Spaceships*. In *Flying Saucers Farewell* (1960) Adamski spent a great deal of time explaining the ways in which current scientific knowledge supported his claims about the space visitors, their technology, and the possibility for life on Venus, Mars, and Saturn. Though Adamski claimed not to be troubled by Moseley's expose, his panicky and often illogical "proofs" told a different story.

One piece of proof Adamski used was a 1957 letter from one R. E. Straith of the State Department Cultural Exchange Committee. The letter indicated that, unofficially, the State Department felt that the Air Force secrecy was misguided and, "while certainly the Department cannot publicly confirm your experiences, it can, I believe, with propriety, encourage your work and your communication of what you sincerely believe should be told to our American public."²⁷ Adamski paraded the letter as proof that the government not only knew the saucers existed but that they endorsed *his* vision of what the saucers meant and his message from the space people.

Unfortunately for Adamski, the Straith Letter sprung from the minds of James Moseley and his friend and fellow saucer researcher Gray Barker. Barker had received from a friend several dozen samples of letterhead from various government departments.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 332.

One weekend at Barker's home in Clarksburg, West Virginia, he and Moseley drafted the hoax letter to Adamski, simply to see if he would tout it as proof of his claims. When he did, saucer researchers almost universally condemned the letter as a hoax. Some, through careful analysis of the typestyle used, even correctly identified Barker as the source. Adamski and his followers, however, continued to hold up the letter as validation of their beliefs. More than just a prank on a gullible saucer believer, the Straith Letter hoax reveals important truths about the nature of saucer belief in the late 1950s. At the time, project Blue Book was in full-swing, and groups such as the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomenon (NICAP) pushed the government for open, public investigations into the saucer question. In perpetrating the hoax, Moseley and Barker were able to take advantage of the credibility which government involvement lent to saucer research. Likewise, the letter gave Adamski's claims of his theories' importance considerable weight.

While some saucer researchers revered Adamski, other loathed him and all others who would claim physical or psychic contact with the visitors. The Flying Saucer field suffered several major schisms in a very short time. Those researchers who believed they were taking a careful, scientific approach to the saucer question despised the popular ridicule brought down upon the field by the outlandish stories of the Contactees. In the same way, these serious researchers were put off by the gossip and hoaxes of James Moseley and Gray Barker. Thus, by the mid-1950s, saucer research had a tripartite structure. On the left wing lay the Contactees, with their wild claims of conversations with the aliens. In the center were Moseley and Barker, freely criticizing and satirizing

believers of all stripes. National saucer organizations, searching for solid, physical proof of the saucers, occupied the right wing.

The national saucer organizations, those with the least sensational, most scientific approach, rose to prominence in the late 1950s and 1960s. Clara L. John and T. Townsend Brown founded The National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomenon (NICAP) in August of 1956. The group's stated goal was to "direct a united scientific investigation of aerial phenomena."²⁸ From its very beginning, NICAP aimed to be as serious as possible about the saucer question. Its board of directors included retired generals and admirals, physicists, and free-lance saucer writer Donald Keyhoe. Born in 1897, Keyhoe served as a Marine Corps pilot until an injury forced his retirement in 1923. In 1927, while working as chief of information for the U. S. Department of Commerce, he was the official government envoy accompanying Charles Lindbergh on his nationwide tour following his historic trans-Atlantic flight. During the 1930s and 40s, after leaving the Commerce Department, he became a freelance aviation writer. Keyhoe's first foray into the realm of the saucers was an article in the January, 1950 issue of *True* magazine entitled, "The Flying Saucers are Real!" Within a year, Keyhoe expanded this article into a 1953 book, *Flying Saucers From Outer Space*. This in-depth, book firmly established Keyhoe as an authority on flying saucers.²⁹ In this early work, Keyhoe's focus was on sighting reports and hypothesizing on the reason for saucer visits, rather than on the government cover-up theories he would later develop. Unlike many saucer writers, Keyhoe had a great deal of experience in both the military and the federal government. This experience and the fact that he always used his full title of "Major

²⁸ Peebles, 114.

²⁹ Peebles, 39.

Donald E. Keyhoe, USMC, Ret.” on his books, lent Keyhoe’s credibility that other writers did not have.

By early 1956, Keyhoe had taken control of NICAP and drastically changed its focus. No longer would the organization concentrate on individual saucer sightings. Rather, NICAP focused on pressuring Congress to hold open, televised hearings on the saucer problem and, in doing so, force the USAF to release secret documents about the saucers, which Keyhoe was convinced existed.³⁰

NICAP’s new goal of ending the saucer cover-up led to rifts between it and other saucer organizations, particularly Corel Lorenzen’s Aerial Phenomenon Research Organization (APRO). The key difference between these two organizations was that APRO, while engaging in serious, scientific investigation of saucers, did not believe that there was a government cover-up nor that an organization like NICAP should spend its time encouraging their members to lobby their Congressional representatives for government involvement in the saucer issue. Rather, believers would find the truth about the saucers from careful investigation and observation of the phenomenon. Keyhoe also alienated the Contactee branch of saucer belief, by refusing to even report their stories in NICAP publications. This further widened the dichotomy between “serious” and “frivolous” UFO research.

The end result of these rifts and arguments between saucer research factions was that, due to the public nature of its work, NICAP became synonymous with “serious” saucer research in the 1950s and 60s. This marginalized other, smaller, organizations which limited their efforts to reporting saucer sightings and trying to solve the mystery on

³⁰ David M. Jacobs, *The UFO Controversy in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 130-132.

their own, without Congressional help. Thus, when a congressional inquiry did eventually materialize, NICAP would find its fortunes tied to the outcome.

That inquiry would take place in 1967, fulfilling NICAP's efforts and reflecting the fact that—at least in the eyes of the public—the saucer question was too big for the government to ignore. Congress commissioned the Condon Committee, a group of scientists under the direction of Edward U. Condon, to determine whether or not the issue of flying saucers deserved further government study and expense. Throughout 1967, the Committee investigated saucer sightings and after numerous internal personnel shakeups delivered a verdict. The Committee determined that the vast majority of sightings were of explainable objects. They recommended that the government spend no more time investigating the mystery.³¹

The effects of the Condon Report were immediate. The USAF decided to disband project Blue Book in March of 1969, with the final shutdown to come in December. In the year following the release of the report, sightings reported to the USAF fell to 146, the lowest number since 1947.³² Saucer believers attempted to rebound from the overwhelming negative effects of the report. They argued that the Committee had never been objective to begin with, and that the committee's report admitted that they could not explain over 1/3 of the sightings addressed. Despite these arguments, many in America took the Condon Report as the final word on the existence of flying saucers. Saucer research, of course, did not disappear after the release of the Condon Report. The nature of the research, however, did change in some ways. NICAP experienced the biggest

³¹ Peebles, 190.

³² *Ibid.*, 191.

changes. Being tied in the public mind most closely to the Condon Committee, NICAP saw its membership (which had a mid-60s peak of 12,000) fall to 7,800 by mid-1969.³³

The only groups not really affected by the Report were the Contactee enclaves—which throughout the 1970s increasingly became more cult-like and isolated—and the centrist saucer buffs like Gray Barker and James Moseley. In a letter to *Saucer News*³⁴ readers, Barker admitted that he was “not greatly disappointed. . . in that I never expected too much from it anyhow.” He explained that the “complexities of the UFO mystery far transcend the scope of a half-million dollar project.”³⁵ Moseley was less sanguine. In a 1969 issue of *Saucer News*, Moseley expressed what he thought to be the most troubling aspect of the Condon Report.

We were worried and sad. What if Condon were RIGHT! What if he could convince US! What if there WERE no saucers! What would we talk about? What would we do with all that leisure time if we stopped slaving at our saucer research on weekend?. . . Probably we would be reduced to having cookouts, perusing the Reader’s Digest, showing up at Rotary Club, and Making Money.³⁶

If, as the Condon Report asserted, flying saucers were not worth the government’s time and expense to investigate, what further relevance would flying saucer researchers have? For groups such as NICAP, the Condon Report led to a reinvention and simplification of the organization’s goals: investigation rather than lobbying. For Moseley, there must have been some question in his mind of whether or not saucer researchers had wasted the past two decades tilting at windmills the government now said didn’t exist. With the reduced number of sightings and depressed subscription rates, Moseley suspended publication of *Saucer News* for about six years, from 1970 to 1976 and concentrated on

³³ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁴ *Saucer News* was, at this time, co-owned and published with Moseley.

³⁵ Barker, “The Condon Report,” no date, Gray Barker Collection

³⁶ Moseley, “A Lively Corpse,” *Saucer News*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1969: 1-2.

his pre-Columbian antique business and real estate ventures.³⁷ The saucer field, however, would rise again in the mid 1970s and Moseley would be back on board, providing his unique brand of commentary.

Kenneth Arnold's 1947 saucer sighting and the 1969 Condon Committee report served as bookends to the incredibly varied, prolific, and outspoken Cold War subculture of flying saucer belief. The many ups, downs and turning points in the saucer story during these years, as well as the personalities that brought these about, show that saucer research was not a dogmatic monolith. Like religion and politics, saucer research comprised a number of different beliefs. These schisms often led to bitter rivalries between groups with similar goals and incredible eruptions of animosity when groups with different views or goals crossed paths. The Contactees and serious scientific organizations both made statements, often expressing dissatisfaction with the way in which government related to the people of the United States during these years. Whether it was George Adamski proclaiming the humanity will never get to where it needs to be unless it abandoned war and materialism or Donald Keyhoe asserting that government had a responsibility to investigate saucers, UFO believers had important messages for the political and social hierarchy of the day.

³⁷ Moseley and Pflock, 218.

Chapter Three

“The Brothers will not fail us if we follow their Guidance”
Saucer Believers Urging Societal Change

Saucer believers used their beliefs to influence the world around them. Through their arguments about saucers they called for reform in individuals, nations, and the world. The most strident of saucer believers' calls for reform during the Cold War addressed American society and culture. Many prominent saucer writers asserted that militarism, materialism, and spiritual emptiness all characterized American culture of the 1950s and 60s. Although calls for changes in America came from different areas of the saucer spectrum, the Contactees remained prominent and outspoken in their warnings of doom if America did not abandon its path of military buildup and mistrust of other nations. The Contactees also placed a burden on individual Americans to be more understanding and tolerant of each other, and to rely less on material gain for happiness. Writers such as Donald Keyhoe, Corel Lorenzen and others who led national saucer research organizations generally did not share in the Contactees' florid predictions and warnings, preferring instead to work toward effecting more moderate—but still significant—change in the areas of government and the scientific establishment. To a certain extent, these nationally prominent exponents of saucer belief ignored the Contactees' beliefs and teachings, focusing instead on the unbelievable nature of their stories. This dichotomy not only emphasized the conflict within the saucer community but also helped undermine the Contactees' efforts to influence society.

The Contactee movement began in late 1952 with George Adamski's alleged encounter with a man from Venus. Adamski's interest in otherworldly topics and his desire for reform in the United States began long before that November day. Adamski

spent his early years as a US cavalryman, Yellowstone park maintenance worker, flourmill worker, and concrete contractor. In 1926, after moving to California, he founded a monastery in Laguna Beach called “The Royal Order of Tibet.” The order had obtained a license to manufacture wine for religious purposes and selling the wine was Adamski’s main funding source through the end of prohibition.¹ Adamski rarely spoke of the Royal Order after he attained recognition as a Contactee. In his first published work, he simply described himself as a “philosopher, student, teacher, saucer researcher” making no mention of a specific organization.² By not explicitly acknowledging his past as head of the Royal Order (aside from his label of “philosopher”), Adamski was able to portray himself as a saucer researcher who was spreading the space visitors’ messages rather than his own. Adamski had several students who listened to him lecture on Eastern philosophies and the Cosmic Law—his somewhat vague term for a system of beliefs centered on principles of love for one’s fellow people, humility, and a rejection of materialism. One of these students was Alice Wells, who owned the hamburger stand that would serve as Adamski’s base of operations once his Contactee fame took hold.³ Adamski’s activities during these pre-contact days were not confined to bootlegging wine and informal philosophizing. He authored a number of pamphlets and a science fiction novel, which addressed many of the themes he would later incorporate into his Contactee writings. Two writings in particular, both from 1937, highlight the philosophical view that would resurface in his saucer books.

¹ Douglas Curran, *In Advance of the Landing* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 43-44, 71-72.

² Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (London: British Book Centre, 1953), 171.

³ Curtis Peebles, *Watch the Skies! A Chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 93.

“The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth” conveyed both Adamski’s frustration with the condition of humanity and his solution for Earth’s problems. Adamski claimed that the “kingdom of Heaven” was a condition that would one day occur on Earth and that it was not someplace people went when they died. The creation of this paradise depended upon the degree to which humanity would embrace peace, cooperation and liberty. “Such is the heavenly state,” he said, “peace and brotherhood of man, which is something that must be evolved gradually out of chaos.” In 1937, he observed, “Freedom is becoming an unknown quantity in life and peace is little understood.” Adamski cautioned against relying upon governments or organized religion to solve the world’s problems. “Looking to the outer things for heaven is vain,” he said, “seeking peace or joy from the effective world is useless. If there is to be peace among nations there must first be peace in the hearts of the individuals making up those nations.” He used Jesus as an example who tried to achieve these standards: “He did not discriminate between races, colors, creeds, or theories . . . His law was not hate, but love.”⁴ In the late 1930s, it might have seemed to Adamski that humanity might never bring about heaven on earth. Hitler and Mussolini had seized power in Europe, racial oppression was rampant in the United States, and the Great Depression continued. To Adamski, the oppression of dictatorial governments and the hostility of political and religious discrimination prevented humanity from reaching its potential and unnecessarily delayed this kingdom of heaven.

Adamski took this idea of equality and looking within for answers and brought them down to a more personal level in “Satan, Man of the Hour,” also written in 1937. In

⁴ George Adamski, “The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth”, 1937 (published online by the George Adamski Foundation: <http://www.gafintl-adamski.com/html/heaven.html>), 1-2.

this story, five men (a “great captain of industry”, an Army officer, a “well-known” minister, a scientist, and a bookkeeper) talked among themselves about who—in terms of power and influence—was the “man of the hour.” A stranger enters and declares that Satan is, in fact, the man of the hour. The men laugh, explaining that Satan is merely a “picturesque figure of a somewhat ancient mythology,” no longer applicable to any modern discussions. The stranger smiles and informs the men that he refers not to the traditional representation of the Devil, but rather “the power of selfishness and greed which Satan represents.” The five men-of-the-world each protest in turn. The minister, scientist, and the others all explain that their particular contributions would make the world a better place. The stranger argues against them all and offers them a way out: abandon their self-centered religions and systems of commerce and instead rely upon the Cosmic Law, which “asks nothing of man except a perfect balance in all phases of life.” The five men refuse the offer and leave. The stranger stands alone, hearing the mocking laugh of Satan all around him.⁵ For Adamski, no one—not even ministers or others seen as wholesome—were free from the taint of selfishness in American society.

These two pamphlets establish that Adamski held concerns about several aspects of American society long before he started to tell tales of flying saucers. By pointing out current events such as the rise of militarism and highlighting the dangers of material greed, Adamski demonstrated to readers that he had his finger on the pulse of current happenings such as the growth of fascism and the economic depression. A link between militarism and materialistic greed had already been established in the public’s mind through the work of the Nye Commission in 1936. This committee of the U.S. Congress

⁵ *Ibid.*, “Satan, Man of the Hour,” reprinted in Adamski, *Behind the Flying Saucer Mystery* (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1960), 149-158.

found a causal link between the munitions industry's lust for higher profits, the devastation of the First World War, and the failure of peace efforts around the world.⁶ Acknowledgement of this connection was not confined to the halls of Congress. The first Superman comic book, published in June 1938, featured the Man of Steel confounding the efforts of Greer, an arms manufacturer and Senator Barrows to embroil the U.S. in a European war to increase profits from weapons sales.⁷ Americans were familiar with the dangers of greed and its implications for provoking deadly conflict. Adamski addressed concerns that Americans had at the time, and provided a solution that allowed the chance for change in the nation, and the world.

The next steps in Adamski's public life, however, show that he was casting about for ways to spread his message of love, peace, and cooperation to more people than he could speak to at his Royal Order of Tibet meetings. The first of these was a 1946 pamphlet entitled "The Possibility of Life on Other Planets."⁸ Here, Adamski outlined his reasons for believing that life on other worlds not only existed, but that the odds were very good that extraterrestrial life was similar to life on Earth. More significantly, he identified belief in extraterrestrial life with forward thinking and social improvement. The aliens could teach us, according to Adamski, "the logical theory of inter-planetary education and evolvement."⁹ The next step in humanity's development was to make contact with extraterrestrial beings. Adamski's pamphlets, however, did not reach an

⁶ Report of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry (The Nye Report), U.S. Congress, Senate, 74th Congress, 2nd sess., February 24, 1936, 2.

⁷ *Action Comics*, #1, June 1938, 11.

⁸ The origins of this article are unclear. It does not appear in George M. Eberhart's *UFOS and the Extraterrestrial Contact Movement: A Bibliography* that lists several of Adamski's other writings. It is likely that it is include in one of several general collections of Adamski's writings published by small UFO-oriented publishers. This article is published on the Adamski Foundation website: <http://www.gafintl-adamski.com/html/GAArt.htm>.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

audience much beyond his Royal Order of Tibet meetings. He sold his pamphlets through the mail and at Palomar Gardens but that could not have reached enough people to truly spread his message.

After the first saucer sightings in 1947, it would be two years before Adamski issued another public writing. This was a science fiction novel entitled *Pioneers of Space: A Trip to the Moon, Mars, and Venus* and it was Adamski's first nationally published work. Though Adamski never claimed that the novel held literal truth, his foreword made it clear that he saw *Pioneers of Space* as more than escapist fantasy. He stated, "Man upon earth is progressive . . . [and] could be taken as a good measuring stick of the vast university within which he lives. Even though he makes many mistakes which are against himself, we still see nothing but steady progress."¹⁰ While his 1937 essays told readers how they could make the world a better place, the message here was a reassurance that humanity would indeed be able to achieve goals of peace, love, and selflessness. The human characters in this novel had not yet reached that kingdom of heaven on Earth, and journeyed to other planets to observe societies who had. Adamski ended his foreword by saying that he was "endeavoring to reasonably speculate" about what scientific advances might be just around the corner. He encouraged readers to establish community roundtables for discussion using *Pioneers of Space* as their textbook and invited readers to write him with any questions they might have.¹¹ Clearly, Adamski meant for the novel's vision of humanity's technological advancement and contact with enlightened, advanced alien civilizations to resonate among readers at a level deeper than

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Pioneers of Space: A Trip to the Moon, Mars, and Venus* (Los Angeles: Leonard-Freefield Co., 1949), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

that of a mere work of fantasy.

Pioneers of Space reads less like a science fiction novel than it does a travelogue. The rocket ship crew traveled to the moon (where they meet the Moonalites), Mars, and Venus. While on each planet, they questioned the natives about their lifestyles, culture and beliefs. All three civilizations were humanoid, Caucasian, worshiped a nameless supreme intelligence, and obeyed the strictures of the Cosmic Law.¹² Members of all three civilizations explained that they once lived as the earth people, caring more for material possessions and power than they did for love and cooperation. They explained Earth's condition as that of a small child, still learning its way in the world. Certain ancient Earth civilizations such as those of the Triterions, Lemurians, and Atlanteans came close to reaching that higher level of consciousness and spiritual harmony. Unfortunately, they were not sufficiently advanced to avoid destruction by the greedy, warmongering elements of their societies. Since their fall, "destruction of the Earth by the hand of civilization has been taking place."¹³ For modern human civilization to escape that destruction, society must imitate these alien cultures.

But Earth might never achieve that higher level, for atomic blasts had thrown off the planet's "balance." The extraterrestrials warned that humans should exercise care when performing future experiments. If such weapons were used in a war, the effects on humanity would be devastating. Such a war was probable because of peoples' greed and selfishness—such qualities led to conflict and with the advent of atomic weapons, conflict would be much more devastating than in previous years. The space people had avoided such a devastating conflict by overcoming materialism and greed—by observing

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 90.

the principles of the Cosmic Law propounded by Adamski in his pamphlets of the 1930s. In *Pioneers of Space*, Adamski showed these principles being used by civilizations that, on the surface, were not too different from humanity. They had the same physiology, the same language, and had overcome the problems with which Earth, at the time, was struggling.¹⁴

If someone were looking for a gripping novel, *Pioneers of Space* would disappoint them. The novel contains no real plot. Instead it presents a series of set pieces with the different alien cultures, which are nearly identical. Adamski's development of the characters who make these travels is not much better. The four members of the crew are indistinguishable from each other, and serve only as vehicles to ask the Moonalites, Martians, and Venusians questions. Not surprisingly, the navigator, whose name is "George," always seems to ask the most insightful questions. Eventually, the rocket ship returned to earth after its journey. The story's narrator reported "the government has requested us to give a world-wide broadcast in the next few days and tell the world what we have actually seen and done. This will be done."¹⁵ The astronauts needed to tell the world about the enlightened civilizations they met and of the lessons that those people taught them. Just as Adamski tried to do with his pamphlets and novels, the people in *Pioneers of Space* knew if humanity were to evolve to a more enlightened level, that the lessons had to be spread to reach as many people as possible.

Placed in the context of Adamski's earlier urgings that the people of Earth obey the cosmic law, *Pioneers of Space* works as a utopian novel, albeit a poorly written one. *Pioneers of Space* doesn't tell a story. Rather, Adamski used the popular and recognized

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

medium of science fiction to convey his view of what the Earth could and should become. By taking themes of pamphlets like “Satan, Man of the Hour” and “The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth” and placing them in a fictional, narrative context, Adamski tried to reach a larger audience than he could with pamphlets and lectures. In 1949, the possibilities of flying saucers and travel to other worlds were not foreign to the American people. A story based around such familiar and popular elements was more likely to make an impact on the reader than Adamski’s pamphlets of the 1930s. Moreover, groups existed which opposed continued testing of atomic weapons, just as did the Moonalites and other aliens. These groups, composed mainly of scientists, received a good deal of recognition in the early years of the Cold War. Thus, just as in the 1930s, Adamski’s goals and concerns were not foreign to readers. Adamski simply placed them in a context that was more accessible to many readers.

In November 1952, however, Adamski moved on from writing science fiction and embarked on a career as a flying saucer Contactee. Since 1949, he had been lecturing to local groups about flying saucers. His expertise on the subject stemmed from a number of photographs he claimed to have taken with the help of several telescopes. Then in 1953, Adamski published his account of meeting a saucer pilot in the California desert. British writer Desmond Leslie’s *Flying Saucers Have Landed* was an extensive survey of mysterious aircraft throughout human history. Drawing heavily from ancient myths, Leslie contended that otherworldly beings had been visiting Earth from antiquity and that most major religions supported the idea of extraterrestrial life. Adamski’s story made up the last fifth of the book and expanded upon the story he had told his friends the previous November.

Like his earlier pamphlets and *Pioneers of Space*, in *Flying Saucers Have Landed* Adamski used a narrative story to convey to the reader the lesson that humanity needs to ascend to a higher spiritual plane. He began by explaining his idea of the solar system as being akin to a classroom, with Earth stuck in the cosmic equivalent of kindergarten.¹⁶ He went on to describe his meeting with the man from Venus. Like the aliens in *Pioneers from Space*, the man looked “like any other man,” except for his ski suit-like clothing and long hair reaching to his shoulders. Through a combination of hand signals and mental telepathy, the Venusian conveyed that his people were concerned over the danger that nuclear warfare represented, not just to humanity, but to the other peoples of the solar system as well. Adamski was not surprised that the Venusian had concerns. He was, however, surprised that “on his face there was not trace of resentment or judgment. His expression was one of understanding and great compassion; as one would have toward a much loved child who had erred through ignorance and lack of understanding.”¹⁷ The Venusian’s attitude indicates that he felt humanity could grow beyond its warlike state. Adamski characterized the Venusian as nonjudgmental, caring, and compassionate so the reader would look on the visitors as teachers, rather than prosecutors. They came here to save us, not to destroy us.

Adamski also learned that the craft was merely a scout ship and that the mother ship remained high in orbit above the Earth. Both were powered by magnetic power. After these technical details were out of the way, Adamski asked the Venusian if he believed in God. The Venusian did, but convinced Adamski that

¹⁶ Leslie and Adamski, 171.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

We on Earth really know very little about this Creator. In other words, our understanding is shallow. Theirs is much broader, and they adhere to the laws of the Creator instead of laws of materialism as Earth men do. . . .He conveyed the thought to me that there they live according to the Will of the Creator, not by their own personal will as we do here on Earth.¹⁸

Adamski closed their conversation by asking why the saucers didn't simply land on the White House lawn or other similarly visible places. The Venusian replied that his people feared the response they would receive from a humanity that was full of fear and so ready to fight rather than understand.¹⁹

Despite the brevity of Adamski's initial contact story, the thematic similarities to his earlier works are clear. The aliens obey the Cosmic Law, the will of the creator. They are concerned about humanity's atomic experimentation, and fear the danger to the entire solar system. Despite the lack of believable facts in Adamski's story, this contact story served the same purpose as did *Pioneers of Space*. Adamski took a popular subject—flying saucers—and used it to convey the same message of spiritual renewal and social cooperation that he had pushed since the 1930s. This message, however, existed in a different context. By the early 1950s, Adamski's focused more on international peace and cooperation than he did in the 1930s. In 1953, the superpowers teetered on the brink of nuclear annihilation. Those desperate times led to Adamski giving his space visitor a more direct and forceful message: stop the atomic testing.

Reaction to Adamski's story was immediate. *Flying Saucers Have Landed* went through eleven printings in its first two years of publication. The Flying Saucer

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

community found itself split over Adamski's experience. Although he had many supporters among saucer researchers, he also had vociferous critics. The most outspoken was James Moseley. While Moseley was critical of Adamski's story, he also sensed that there was a deeper agenda to Adamski's work. On his initial saucer investigation trek across the US, Moseley visited Adamski at his café/headquarters in California. He came away from the meeting with the impression that Adamski was "a very kind, intelligent, and sincere man."²⁰ Moseley doubted that his story was true, but had no conclusive evidence that would disprove it. Over the next two years, however, Moseley would talk to those who witnessed Adamski's encounter and by early 1955 he felt that he had enough ammunition to ground Adamski's saucer tales.

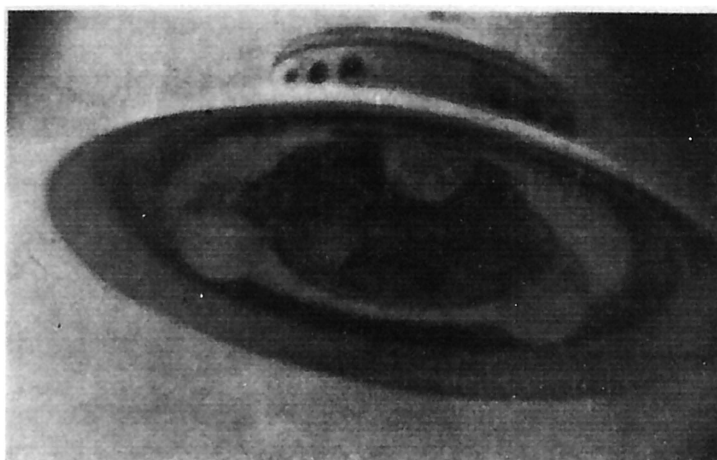


Figure 1- One of Adamski's saucer photographs

In what he would later call his "only major contribution to the field as a Serious UFOlogist,"²¹ Moseley wrote a stunning exposé on the Adamski encounter for the January 1955 issue of *Nexus*. He began by demonstrating that the saucer in Adamski's photographs could be easily replicated with a Chrysler hubcap, a coffee can, and three

²⁰ James W. Moseley and Karl T. Pflock, *Shockingly Close to the Truth! Confessions of a Grave-Robbing UFOlogist* (Amhearst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 67.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

ping pong balls. He went on to explain that through interviews with several of Adamski's witnesses, it was easy to see that none of them actually witnessed the things they had claimed. Moseley learned that all of Adamski's witnesses were already saucer believers (a point not mentioned in the book) and that none of their stories agreed with each other.²²

Another damning piece of evidence was the story of Jerrold Baker, an amateur photographer and saucer researcher. Baker claimed that Adamski attached Baker's name to several the saucer photographs that Adamski took, making it appear that many different people were taking these fantastic pictures. Baker objected to this, but Adamski induced him to stay quiet, saying "With people knowing that you are interested in flying saucers . . . you could do yourself a lot of good." Adamski went on to advise Baker to use the fraudulent photos for evening lectures, which people would pay good money to hear.²³

Moseley concluded that, at the very least, substantial parts of Adamski's story had been fabricated and that "Adamski's narrative contains enough flaws to place in very serious doubt both his veracity and sincerity." While Moseley's investigation shattered the probability that Adamski's story was literal truth, he went on to discuss Adamski and his convictions on a personal level, aside from any saucer visitation claims. Moseley said, "I have been convinced that he is a kindly man who would do harm to no one. If he has written a fraudulent book, I believe that he did so, not so much for his own personal profit, but to put across, in dramatic form, philosophical principles in which he sincerely

²² James W. Moseley, "Some New Facts About 'Flying Saucers Have Landed'" *Nexus*, January, 1955, Vol. 2, No. 1, 7, 12-13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 16.

believes.”²⁴ This caveat creates a distinction between Adamski’s outlandish stories and the message he was attempting to convey. Moseley was the only saucer writer of the time who made this distinction. Although he thought Adamski a rogue, he recognized that Adamski held his beliefs very strongly and sincerely.

Moseley’s exposé and the doubts of other saucer researchers did not call into question the philosophical foundations of Adamski’s writings but the saucer stories through which he conveyed them. Nevertheless, he reacted defensively. He responded to Moseley’s accusations in the spring, 1955 issue of *The Saucerian Bulletin*, edited by Moseley’s friend Gray Barker. In the rebuttal, entitled “Time Will Tell,” Adamski declared that “the truth needs neither exposure nor defense. Time itself proves all truth.” Adamski asserted that he would never tell a lie about meeting with the space people because “the Brother, who themselves are honest, would never stand for deceit of any kind. Should I ever indulge in a single act of falseness I would there by [sic] forfeit the privilege of ever again meeting them and learning from them.”²⁵ Adamski did not present any further “proof” that his tales were true. Just as many of Adamski’s desires for the people of Earth were spiritual rather than material, it follows that acceptance of his stories and experiences rely more on faith than on proof. Adamski’s second Contact-related book would depend on more of that faith to gain the acceptance of saucer readers.

Adamski’s next book, *Inside the Spaceships*, appeared in 1955, shortly after the firestorm of criticism erupted over *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. The new book described Adamski’s adventures aboard the saucers of the Venusians and Saturnians. This book owes much of its structure and ideas to *Pioneers of Space* in that it consisted of

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵ George Adamski, “Time Will Tell” *Saucerian Bulletin*, No. 6, Spring, 1955, 33.

a series of set pieces that served to explicate alien beliefs and culture rather than form a cohesive narrative.²⁶

While Adamski spent much of the book describing otherworldly customs, food, and furniture, he also described conversations with the Great Master—an elderly appearing man, not described as being from any particular planet. The Master was “a greatly evolved being” and “in his present body” over a thousand years old.

Conversations with the Master echo the themes that had been Adamski’s hallmark since the 1930s. Primary among these themes was that the Earth was at the lowest stage of development of all the planets in the solar system. Because of this lack of development, the space beings did not wish for humans to possess the technology to travel to the stars. The Great Master explained to Adamski that they “would gladly give you this knowledge which has served us so well, except that you have not yet learned to live with one another in peace and brotherhood.” Because of this, it is probable that humanity would seek to use this technology to subjugate other worlds in the solar system.²⁷ But things did not have to be this way. The Master further explained to Adamski that “Understanding of the universal [cosmic] laws both uplifts and restricts. As it is now with us, so it could be on your Earth. Lifted up by your knowledge, this same understanding would make it impossible for you to move against your brothers.”²⁸ Throughout this book—and all of Adamski’s writing—there exists a parallel between admonition and hope. For every chiding comment about violence and materialism there is a reassurance that humanity can improve itself and rise to the next level of spiritual evolution. This idea dates back to

²⁶ *Ibid.*, *Inside the Spaceships* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1955)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83, 90.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

“The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth” and is carried through to Adamski’s analogy of the solar system as a school with progressively higher grades through which humanity must progress.

Inside the Spaceships was a logical extension of the Adamski belief system. All the conversations with the master are along the same lines: humanity must learn to obey the Universal Law and preserve peace around the world. The book contains only two photographs of alleged spaceships and two drawings by Adamski, rather than the more numerous photos that appeared in the first book. Adamski lists no witnesses, no friends who could corroborate his story. Even more than *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, this book requires the reader to believe Adamski’s story on complete faith. Adamski’s point, however, is not to convince the reader that he literally flew on a flying saucer. Rather, his ideas about peace and cooperation take center stage.

Adamski’s third and final Contactee book, published in 1960, was *Flying Saucers Farewell* (published in paperback as *Behind the Flying Saucer Mystery*). This book represented a departure from Adamski’s formula of imparting wisdom and lessons on the Cosmic Law couched in terms of flying saucer adventures. *Flying Saucers Farewell* consisted of two distinct parts. In the first part, Adamski responded to criticisms of his saucer tales. Utilizing formulas of “cosmic mathematics” and ill-explained theories of gravity propulsion, Adamski attempted to prove that the technologies he discussed in his previous books were more science fact than science fiction.²⁹ He mixed this with reiterations of messages from the Great Master from *Inside the Spaceships*, providing more lessons and teachings on the universal law and further instructions that would help

²⁹ George Adamski, *Behind the Flying Saucer Mystery* (New York: Warner, 1960), 19-25.

humanity move up the ladder of spiritual evolution.

Another aspect of Adamski's attempts to convince readers of the saucers' existence was a reliance on ancient myths and religious texts to demonstrate that visits by the space people did not just begin in the 1940s. Adamski devoted an entire chapter to looking back to the Bible and other ancient writings. He pointed out different lights, stars, and other aerial phenomena and explained that they were actually ancient space ships. He also pulled verses from the New Testament and explained how the holy writings of Christianity and Judaism were completely compatible with the Cosmic Law.³⁰ Adamski wanted to show readers that the principles he promoted were not necessarily that far off from what they might already believe. In this way, he demystified his teachings and attempted to gain access to an even larger audience than saucer believers: members of mainstream American Christian and Jewish communities.

The second part of *Flying Saucers Farewell* details some of the UFO lectures Adamski gave in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, England, the Netherlands, Italy, and India between 1955 and 1960. In all these nations he met with loyal followers who hung on his every word. His proudest moment, however, was when Queen Juliana of the Netherlands invited him for a private audience to discuss flying saucers. This invitation led Adamski to believe that she "[had] the welfare of her people at heart. Therefore she [had] an open mind that permits her to look at all facets of life, not bowing to the dictates of the few."³¹

While his meeting with the Queen proved successful and he met with support from most audiences, other troubles seemed to dog Adamski's every step. In New

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 79-100.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

Zealand, problems with his visa delayed the start of his lectures.³² In England, he faced a similar problem when he was prohibited from lecturing due to his lack of a work permit.³³ The greatest problem occurred in Zurich where Adamski was laughed off the stage. Adamski termed this disturbance “our first warning of organized resistance.”³⁴ It was at this point in the narrative that Adamski began to tie together all the misfortunes that occurred on his lecture tour. He interpreted these occurrences not as the unfortunate coincidences that plague many travelers, but as a concerted effort to stifle his message and destroy his mission. To Adamski’s mind, the only reason for this would be the core of his message: that rampant materialism and greed were the root of violence and destruction. For humanity to survive and thrive it must abandon those things. But there existed some who did not want to rise above greed and materialism or were too deeply entrenched in their selfish ways to welcome these revelations. To Adamski’s mind, it was logical to assume that he should hold these people responsible for his troubles. Adamski called these people “The Silence Group.”

“The Silence Group” was a term first used and popularized by NICAP Chief Donald Keyhoe in the early 1950s. Keyhoe used it to describe those elements of the US government that wanted to keep secret the reality of flying saucer visitation from the public. In Adamski’s flying saucer universe, the focus of the Silence Group was different. Their conspiracy was worldwide and centered in Zurich: “What happened to the money-changers Christ drove out of the temple? It seems as though they have gathered over the centuries in ZurichThe invisible reins of financial influence extend

³² *Ibid.*, 107.

³³ *Ibid.*, 123.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

from Zurich to puppet organizations in every nation.”³⁵ Given Adamski’s identification of materialism and greed being humanity’s greatest enemies, it made sense that the international cabal seeking to stifle him was financial in nature. In Adamski’s worldview, the denizens of high finance would have had the most to lose from people adopting Adamski’s philosophy on a large scale. This was the first time Adamski used a conspiracy theory to explain resistance to his ideas. He twisted the conspiracy in a typically Adamskian way, however, placing the blame at the feet of commerce and abstract greed rather than framing the conspiracy in a political context. His focus remained on improving the social and spiritual conditions of the United States and the rest of the world through application of the Cosmic Law. Thus, even considering this shift to a more paranoid style of narrative Adamski remained centered on that Cosmic Law and the improvement of humanity. By presenting elaborate proofs of the physical reality of interplanetary craft and hints of worldly conspiracies, *Flying Saucers Farewell* echoed those UFO writings which dealt less and less with the message of the Space beings and more on proving the existence of the saucers to skeptical readers. While, superficially, Adamski’s proofs and claims of international cabals seem forced and unlikely, they served the same purpose as his initial flying saucer stories. The original tale of meeting the Venusian in the desert encapsulated Adamski’s long-standing views on needed changes in society. In the same way, the new stories of scientific validation and multinational conspiracy might have convinced the reader that Adamski’s ideas were worthy of cover-up.

Adamski’s introduction of an international conspiracy was not surprising given

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

what other saucer writers of the time promulgated. When Adamski introduced the conspiracy angle to his story, he echoed the views of his contemporaries. Donald Keyhoe of NICAP had claimed since the early 1950s that there existed a cover-up at the highest levels of government regarding the origins and mission of the saucers. In 1955, Gray Barker wrote *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*³⁶, which introduced the concept of the “Men in Black”—mysterious men who visited saucer witnesses and threatened them with harm if they shared their encounters. Even one of Adamski’s alleged witnesses from the 1952 sighting, George Hunt Williamson³⁷ claimed that international financiers worked to keep the truth about saucers away from the public. Thus, the framework for a saucer-oriented conspiracy was not Adamski’s invention at all. Rather, as he did with saucers, Adamski co-opted an existing mythology and used it to further shore up his message of peace, love, and cooperation.

Although *Flying Saucers Farewell* was the last saucer book that Adamski published, he continued to write and lecture until his death in 1965. Throughout his later years, Adamski’s approach focused more on spreading his philosophical message rather than proving the space visitors’ reality. Indeed, it was his philosophies that many of his followers remembered about him after his death. A good measuring stick for saucer contact believers’ views of Adamski and the significance of his career is the March, 1966 issue of *Probe* magazine. Published a few months after Adamski’s death, this issue consisted of readers’ remembrances of Adamski and some reprints of his writings. Editor Joseph Ferriere, in “George Adamski’s Appeal to the Future Leaders,” said:

³⁶ Gray Barker, *They Knew Too Much about Flying Saucers* (Lilburn, Georgia: Illuminet Press, 1997).

³⁷ George Hunt Williamson, *The Saucers Speak* (London: Neville Spearman, 1963).

George Adamski was a man with a purpose. He, most of all, realized that if ever we are to straighten out the mess we have created on this planet, we must take the youngsters into our confidence and impress upon them not only the need to work towards the goal of making this earth a better place in which to live, but also to guide their steps toward the achievement of that goal.

Ferriere went on to describe a lecture Adamski gave to a group of elementary school children in Boston. The theme of this lecture was the “the importance of learning about ourselves . . .so that we may then know how to coordinate our senses, thereby achieving a harmonious relationship with nature and the universe.”³⁸ Ferriere makes no mention in this article about Adamski’s saucer beliefs, only that his philosophies, if passed on to the younger generation, would have a positive impact on their lives, and on humanity as a whole.

In addition to giving large public lectures, Adamski also met with saucer believers in small groups. People’s impressions of Adamski in this setting are significant because at these small groups, Adamski would respond to spontaneous questions from those present. On April 1, 1965, Adamski met with several followers at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Ovila Larochelle in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. One of those present was Lionel Renaud. Renaud found that Adamski’s stories held more than tales of saucers. Rather, “the telling of a better way of life can be told in diverse ways, or inter-related to things that are new or strange, but that does not detract from the true facts, and the true facts lie in the goodness of the words spoken and the sincerity of the man himself.” Whether or not Adamski’s stories came from star visitors or elsewhere, Renaud concluded, “They should be adhered to and practiced by all. The world is in dire need of constructive practices, and has been for too long.” Renaud believed Adamski’s contact stories to be,

³⁸ Joseph Ferriere, “George Adamski’s Appeal to the Future Leaders” *Probe* No. 14, March/April, 1966, 2.

at most, “of a nature practicable.”³⁹ Despite this half-hearted acceptance of the saucer aspect of Adamski’s story, Renaud recognized the sincerity and importance of their philosophical messages—the same messages that had remained constant since the 1930s.

A major aspect of Adamski’s significance to saucer belief was his influence on other believers. Other Contactees, no matter what their similarities or differences to Adamski and his adventures, all owe a great deal to his example. Despite all other Contactees claiming that their contacts took place before his, none of them told anyone about these contacts until after Adamski’s story had hit the streets. Most of these other Contactees’ stories were more spectacular and, amazingly, less believable than Adamski’s. Contactees such as Orfeo Angelucci and George Hunt Williamson claimed that their contacts with the space people took place purely on the psychic level; hence no one could expect them to have any proof of their claims.⁴⁰ Others claimed to have experienced physical contacts, like Adamski. Whether the contacts were physical or mental, Contactees often shared with followers philosophical messages similar to Adamski’s.

George Hunt Williamson, one of those who allegedly witnessed Adamski’s initial 1952 contact, published his own book of messages from the space visitors in 1954. Williamson claimed that he received the content of his book, entitled *The Saucers Speak*, from aliens on all planets of the solar system. These aliens communicated through automatic writing: psychic transmissions from the aliens controlled his hand and recorded messages. Williamson, like Adamski, was involved with occult beliefs before the saucer phenomenon began. He did not, however, publish or release writings publicly as did

³⁹ *Ibid.*, untitled article, 8.

⁴⁰ Moseley and Pflock, 75.

Adamski. Rather, he conversed with other occultists and edited *Valor*, the newsletter of a Noblesville, Indiana based organization called Soulcraft. Soulcraft was founded and run by William Dudley Pelley, a former fascist who was imprisoned for sedition during the Second World War. Williamson also had an interest in archeology and visited ruins throughout central and South America. He claimed to be a renowned anthropologist, but his academic credentials were largely self-conferred or from unaccredited institutions.⁴¹ In *The Saucers Speak*, Williamson claimed that most of the aliens' messages came to him in the summer of 1952, months before Adamski's encounter. Williamson, not content with being a mere witness to Adamski's initial contact, wished to set himself up as pre-eminent among the Contactees. Since his message, in many ways, mirrored Adamski's this attempt to establish primacy would seem to have been motivated more by professional jealousy than anything else.

Williamson's contact stories shared some thematic similarities with Adamski's. His first contact was with Nah-9 of the Solar X Group. Nah-9 confirmed that it was Martian saucers that had been seen over California and urged the people of Earth to come together as one and join the union of planets in the solar system. There were restrictions, however, on which Earthlings the space people would assist:

We are friends of those interested, but we are not interested in those of the carnal mind. By that we mean the stupid preservation of self; disregarding the will of the Creative Spirit and His Sons.

Williamson described the "Creative Spirit" as being analogous to humanity's conception of God. Nah-9 also revealed that "Evil planetary men" of Earth would destroy humanity with the new hydrogen bomb. Other revelations included the fact that the sun is, in fact,

⁴¹ Alec Hidell, "George Hunt Williamson and the Genesis of the Contactees" *The Excluded Middle*, No. 3, 3.

cold and that the representative from Uranus disapproved of the Martians contacting Earth.⁴² Williamson's stories had similarities to Adamski's encounters. Both warned of the dangers of new atomic weapons technology and suggested that humanity would find a solution if they became united in purpose, seeking peace and cooperation instead of war.

George Van Tassel was another saucer writer who had psychic and physical contact with otherworldly beings, but his goals differed from those of Adamski and Williamson. Van Tassel was a flight test engineer in California who lived near Giant Rock, a seven-story boulder in the desert. Having an interest in both saucers and meditation, he led a group of believers in transcendental meditation sessions in the cavern beneath the boulder in early 1953. In August of that year (a few months after Adamski's first Contactee story was published) Van Tassel claimed to have ridden in a Venusian spaceship and wrote several books about his experiences including *I Rode in a Flying Saucer*. He claimed that the Venusians gave him plans for something called the Integretron. This device—a 16-sided dome built of wood and concrete, held together by glue—reportedly would rejuvenate the user, eliminating disease, and allowing for a very long life. The radiological effects of nuclear war would be negligible, as long as one reached the safety of the Integretron in time. Van Tassel received monetary donations from supporters and appeared on numerous talk shows sharing news about the invention. He also founded the College of Universal Wisdom, a non-profit organization focused on scientific and spiritual learning. At the time of Van Tassel's death in 1978, the

⁴² George Hunt Williamson, *The Saucers Speak* in Jay David, ed., *The Flying Saucer Reader* (New York: Signet Books, 1967), 82-83.

Integretron was reportedly 90% complete and almost ready for testing.⁴³ Adamski and Williamson's writings focused on the necessity of people changing not only themselves but the world as well. Van Tassel, offering spiritual meditation and the physical safety of the Integretron, provided an escape from the frightening realities of the Cold War. No matter what new disease or radiation might be in the air, the Integretron would protect those who accepted the truth of Van Tassel's alien contacts.

Other Contactees appeared in the 1950s, sharing messages similar to Adamski's. Truman Bethurum, who wrote *Aboard a Flying Saucer* in 1954, claimed to have visited the planet Clarion. Clarion was an idyllic place without poverty, hunger, politicians, taxes, or atomic weapons. Aura Rhanes, the female captain of the Clarionite saucer was, according to Bethurum, "tops in shapeliness and beauty" and warned him that unless Earthlings eliminated nuclear weapons, Earth would be destroyed, causing "much confusion" in space.⁴⁴ Upon returning to Earth, Bethurum's wife left him after becoming convinced that Aura Rhanes wasn't an alien at all, but simply a human woman with whom Truman was carrying on an affair.⁴⁵

Daniel Fry was a mechanic for the Aerojet General Corporation. One day, while working, he saw a saucer approach and land. He examined the saucer and met the pilots (from Mars) who flew him from White Sands, New Mexico to New York and back. Fry published *The White Sands Incident* in 1955. This book contained mostly technical

⁴³ "Aliens: An Ashtabula County Man had Close Encounter, Topic of New Book," Ashtabula (Ohio) *Star Beacon*, June 20, 1998. Reprinted at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~vantasselfamilyhistoryhomepage/GeorgeVT.html>

⁴⁴ Peebles, 99.

⁴⁵ Moseley and Pflock, 166.

information about the saucers, and argued that if humanity were to learn the control of gravity and magnetic power, like the Martians, then political and social problems would disappear. One problem that Fry discussed extensively in *The White Sands Incident* was juvenile delinquency, a major concern for Americans in the 1950s. Children were the future, Fry explained, and their engaging in criminal activities reflected poorly on American society. Customary for the Contactees of the time, Fry also wrote that the Martians did not want Earth to experience a nuclear war. Alan, the Martian who contacted Fry, said humanity has “a personal duty and responsibility to cooperate in the efforts our people are making to help you people on earth to alter their present flow of events, and avert the holocaust which is otherwise inevitable.”⁴⁶ Fry’s message seems less optimistic than Adamski’s. Fry presents a scenario in which the fiery destruction of the Earth is a certainty unless humanity turns from its path. Adamski, on the other hand, offered possibilities for the future. Later Fry, like Van Tassel, founded an organization dedicated to spreading these stories and beliefs. Called Understanding, by 1961, it had 1500 members. Fry was popular on the saucer lecture circuit, despite focusing more on new technologies of space travel more than his stories of visiting the Martians.⁴⁷

The Contactees whose contact experiences came after Adamski shared his concern about the dangers of warfare and atomic weapons and the need for cooperation and understanding among the people of Earth. None of them, however, gave any indication of holding these views before they published their contact stories. This fact does not diminish the significance of their calls for change. Rather, it bolsters the significance of Adamski: Other saucer believers, seeing that Adamski had found a

⁴⁶ Daniel Fry, *The White Sands Incident* (Louisville: Best Books, 1966), 81, 63-64.

⁴⁷ Moseley and Pflock, 166.

workable means to evangelize his message of peace and cooperation, decided to do so for themselves. Adamski's writings not only established a template that other Contactees used to spread their messages about how humanity needed to change but also created a mutual forum through which they could agree with Adamski's initial calls for change.

When evaluating the Contactees, one cannot disregard the profit motive. In the 1950s and 60s, being a Contactee meant that one sold books, was paid for lectures and public appearances and, like Van Tassel and Fry, had the opportunity to start organizations which would continue to bring in money from members. The Contactees' critics have used this profit motive to cast aspersions on the message the Contactees spread. Logically, however, a Contactee could have made the same money and sold the same number of books without the moral messages about peace and cooperation. Stories about otherworldly visitors and their advanced ships would have intrigued Americans anyway. The fact that the Contactees included moral and philosophical lessons anyway, indicates a degree of sincerity on their part.

Adamski and the other Contactees used their stories as a tool in their attempt to change American society for the better. Though their stories were unbelievable to many and easily disproved, they succeeded in reaching many people who might never have heard their messages any other way. The Contactees took messages of cooperation, peace and warnings about the dangers of materialism and militarism and wove them together with stories that capitalized on a mystery that had captured the public's attention. Tales of flying saucers held the interest of many Americans from their advent in 1947. George Adamski saw this, and adapted his beliefs and messages to mythology of this new phenomenon. Other Contactees, who appeared after Adamski, mimicked not only his

style of story telling but also many of the same messages. Whether this mimicry stemmed from agreement with his beliefs or an attempt to glom on to a popular genre was not as significant as the Contactees' power to spread messages that challenged the Cold War paradigm of material consumption, military antagonism and the development of cataclysmically destructive weapon systems.

Chapter Four

*“Actually, The Air Force is not the Only Agency Involved”
Flying Saucer Believers Urging Change in Science and the Government*

At the same time the Contactees shared their messages of peace, cooperation and understanding, other approaches to the UFO mystery also came into prominence. These large national organizations rejected the Contactees' stories, believing that scientific investigation, not personal contact, would reveal the origins and intentions of the flying saucers. Groups such as the National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomenon (NICAP) and the Aerial Phenomenon Research Organization (APRO) took a media-savvy approach to saucer research, working to solve the mystery of the saucers while, at the same time, calling into question aspects of the American government and the scientific establishment. NICAP head Donald Keyhoe appeared on numerous television and radio shows and, to many of the public, was the person most associated with the call for further investigation of the saucers.¹ Keyhoe and APRO founder Corel Lorenzen both wrote several books that documented hundreds of saucer sightings from around the world. These books and the newsletters published by NICAP and APRO reached thousand of saucer believers in the United States.

While NICAP and APRO both held that careful scientific investigation would solve the mystery of the saucers, significant differences existed between them, centered on the proper role of the government in the saucer issue. Corel Lorenzen's APRO denied that the government or military had any secret knowledge of the flying saucers. Donald Keyhoe, however, insisted that a cover-up existed at the highest levels of the government and military. This insistence that the government actively hid information that could

¹ Moseley and Pflock, 140.

solve the saucer issue sparked public debate about the Government's policy towards the flying saucer issue and eventually led to an open, government-sanctioned scientific investigation of the phenomenon. Keyhoe's suspicions about the cover-up represented a significant effort to break down the walls of Cold War military-scientific-government collusion. APRO and Corel Lorenzen's approach, though different from Keyhoe's, also made strong statements about the relationship between government and science. For Lorenzen, the scientific truth of flying saucers lay outside of governmental control. The truth behind the saucers, however, would remain hidden unless investigators pushed the mainstream scientific community to consider the possibility of life on other planets. In the minds of APRO members and leadership, many scientists were trapped in a limited paradigm that did not allow them to acknowledge the possibility of life on other planets.

Keyhoe's insistence that the government of the United States concealed information about flying saucers from the eyes of the public was a constant in his writings from the very beginning. While he did claim a cover-up existed, he was careful to not attribute malicious motives to the conspirators. In the foreword to 1955's *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*, he said

In revealing this censorship, I am not attacking the Air Force as a whole. Most of the officers and officials I have encountered are simply obeying orders. Nor do I attribute unpatriotic motives to the "silence group" members who originate these orders. Undoubtedly they are actuated by a high motive—the need, as they see it, to protect the public from possible hysteria . . . If the public is not informed of the facts, fear of the unknown may prevail.

Despite its noble motives, Keyhoe considered the cover-up dangerous to the United States. Continual denial, Keyhoe wrote, "only heightens the possibility of hysteria."² Thus, with this reasoning, Keyhoe both acknowledged appropriate motives on the part of

² Donald Keyhoe, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1955), 7

the conspirators and argued that continued secrecy would do more harm than good. Openness on the part of the government would not cause hysteria—rather openness would reassure Americans that their government was, in fact, in control of the situation.

At the heart of Keyhoe's claims throughout the 1950s was the assumption that Air Force officials had standing orders (Air Force Regulation 200-2) that restricted the kinds of information on saucers that officials could release to the public, and that only "hoaxes, practical jokes, and erroneous UFO reports . . . be given to the public." Keyhoe considered "this hidden order . . . a revelation in its apparent distrust of the American people."³ The cover-up, he claimed, took the form not only of these denials of saucer sightings but of outright censorship. One incident that *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* detailed was that of NICAP member Frank Edwards. Edwards was a prominent radio and print journalist who worked as a news commentator for the American Federation of Labor. During the summer of 1954, Edwards had persuaded AFL president George Meany to let him broadcast a nationwide special on the existence of AFR 200-2 and report on some extraordinary sightings that began in Wilmington, Delaware and had spread across the country. Keyhoe and Edwards both felt that this report would force the USAF to reveal the hidden details about the saucers. Then, a few days before the broadcast, Edwards called Keyhoe and informed him that George Meany had ordered Edwards to scrap all mention of saucers and told him that there would be a censor in the studio prepared to end the broadcast if Edwards failed to comply. Edwards resigned rather than go on the air with those conditions.⁴ Edwards discussed this, and other instances of censorship, in his first book *Flying Saucers- Serious Business*. In a chapter

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 189-194.

entitled “Muzzles for Americans?” Edwards acknowledged that the government might have had good reasons for saucer censorship. But he also charged that such censorship was not confined to the realm of UFOs—that any “falsification was all right if the results were good.” Edwards then went even farther, stating that

It was simply another way of repeating the old Nazi line that it’s all right to lie to the public if it is for their own good. Whether it was justified would be decided by those who did the lying, of course.⁵

Keyhoe, who certainly opposed saucer censorship, never went so far as to compare the government to the Nazis. They did, however, agree that the perceived government cover-up of saucer information was dangerous. Frank Edwards was on the NICAP board and Keyhoe featured him prominently in all of his books throughout the ‘50s and ‘60s. Thus, Edwards’s views on government censorship could not have varied too much from the NICAP party line. Edwards’s comments, like Keyhoe’s, frame the question of flying saucers in a political context rather than a scientific or spiritual one. Establishing a political framework for UFO secrecy would, in later years, serve to give Keyhoe and NICAP a visible, high profile adversary, making their quest more accessible to the public.

Keyhoe experienced similar censorship when he appeared on an Armstrong Circle Theatre television program about UFOs in 1958. Here, Keyhoe was upset that he only received seven minutes of airtime (the Air Force received 25) and was required to clear his comments with the producers and the USAF before he was allowed on the air. Keyhoe’s script went through three revisions before producers cleared it for broadcast. The program, entitled, *UFOs: Enigma of the Skies*, was broadcast January 22, 1958. A few minutes into his segment, Keyhoe deviated from the approved script:

⁵ Frank Edwards, *Flying Saucers: Serious Business* (New York: Bantam, 1966), 135.

And now I'm going to reveal something that has never been disclosed before. For the last six months, we have been working with a Congressional committee investigating official secrecy about UFOs. If all the evidence we have given this committee is made public in open hearings, it will absolutely prove that the UFOs are real machines under intelligent control.⁶

The show's producer, Robert Costello, silenced Keyhoe's microphone before he finished his first sentence. This incident led many to believe that CBS and the Air Force were attempting to silence Keyhoe. It followed that the government was trying to hide something; perhaps Keyhoe was right about government saucer secrecy. NICAP membership rose significantly after this appearance.⁷ Government secrecy was rapidly becoming a fact of life in the America of the 1950s. Though most Americans had little knowledge of CIA operations in Central America and the Middle East, the government made clear the need for covert means to ensure national security and the defensive value of secrecy. The Rosenberg trial, Senator McCarthy's HUAC hearings, the launch of *Sputnik*, and U-2 spy plane crash and subsequent capture of Gary Francis Powers convinced many Americans that the stakes in the Cold War were high, and that the government may have to take extraordinary measures to ensure security. Conversely, however, the self-destruction of McCarthy's anti-communist crusade raised doubts in American's minds about whether the government was going too far to protect its secrets from the menace of the international Communist conspiracy. Thus, Keyhoe had two obstacles to overcome. First, he had to convince the public that a flying saucer cover-up existed. Second, he had to persuade those people that the cover-up was wrong and that NICAP was the best organization to end that cover-up.

⁶ Donald Keyhoe, *Flying Saucers: Top Secret* (New York: Putnam, 1960), 160.

⁷ Peebles, 128-130.

In light of Air Force resistance to discussing the saucer issue with the public, Keyhoe felt that the best way for the truth to reach the public was to push for Congressional hearings. Throughout the 1950s, Keyhoe had met with frustration when dealing with the USAF. Members of Congress, being sensitive to the need for re-election, proved a more attainable target for NICAP's efforts. Beginning in 1957, NICAP published *The UFO Investigator*. This newsletter not only carried sighting reports but also updates about efforts to persuade Congress to hold open hearings. The first issue of *The UFO Investigator*, from July 1957, laid out a number of NICAP's policies, including Keyhoe's personal policy statement about flying saucers. He said, "The evidence that the UFO's [sic] are real, and are interplanetary machines, is conclusive." He also noted "very few members of NICAP have questioned my ability to remain impartial in evaluating reports. I am making every effort to be neutral in my approach to new evidence."⁸ Hints of military conspiracy appeared, however, in a statement by retired Rear Adm. Herbert B. Knowles, a member of the NICAP Board. Knowles said, "I shall be very glad to accept appointment as a member of the Board of Governors and be listed as a 'believer' in the reality of UFO's [sic], with the understanding that I shall resign if it appears at any time that your group is being used to cover up for the top brass."⁹ Clearly, the leadership of NICAP hoped that the presence of retired military officials like Knowles would convince both the public and Congress that the saucer issue was a serious one. Whereas other saucer organizations filled their newsletters with sighting reports from around the world, interviews with other investigators, book reviews, and the like, *UFO Investigator* often contained nothing but

⁸ Donald Keyhoe, *NICAP UFO Investigator*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July, 1957), 29.

⁹ "Statement By Rear Adm. Herbert B. Knowles USN Retired; Member of the NICAP Board", *Ibid*, 17.

reports of how the Air Force stifled various saucer investigations and continually urged members to write their representatives, asking them to initiate official, independent, and scientific investigations into the saucer question. This style of saucer research positioned NICAP as a force for change on the political as well as the scientific level. Most saucer research organizations considered the UFO issue to be, if nothing else, a scientific puzzle that scientists should investigate. By urging readers to become personally involved in persuading their representatives to examine the question of flying saucers, Keyhoe mobilized the thousands of NICAP members into a force for openness and change, breaking down the barriers between the government and the people.

By 1960, with the release of *Flying Saucers: Top Secret*, Keyhoe had further refined his cover-up theory. During the late 1950s, Keyhoe became convinced that the Air Force was getting its orders to continue the cover-up from a source higher up the executive branch. Keyhoe recounted a conversation with fellow NICAP investigator Henry Brennard in which he revealed the identity of the Silence Group:

“I’m convinced it’s the CIA that sets the policy. I suppose they think people should be kept from worrying, until it’s certain there’s nothing to worry about.”

“Sure—Big Papa,” growled Brennard. “Personally, I don’t want anybody—or any government agency—deciding what’s safe for me to know.”¹⁰

That Keyhoe would focus his frustration at the CIA rather than the military indicated that he placed the blame for the cover-up on an entity that was solely a creation of the Cold War. Thus, the cover-up was rooted in the new national security state dictated by the American government’s policy of containment. To Keyhoe and followers of NICAP it must have seemed that a policy of containment was behind the saucer secrecy. The government “contained” evidence of the saucers, compartmentalizing it, and hiding it

¹⁰ Keyhoe, *Flying Saucers: Top Secret*, 154.

from the American people. The concept of “Containment,” first expressed in the Truman Doctrine, applied to all aspects of American society, not just foreign policy. Suburban homes contained housewives; suburbs contained houses and families, the goal being to create strong American communities that could withstand the assaults of international communism. Along with physical containment went intellectual and political containment. Leftist ideologies or suspicion of American leadership, goals or values could brand one an un-American radical.¹¹ Just as the metaphorical Iron Curtain separated eastern Communist nations from western capitalist ones, Keyhoe contended that a “paper curtain” existed which separated government UFO secrets from a curious public.

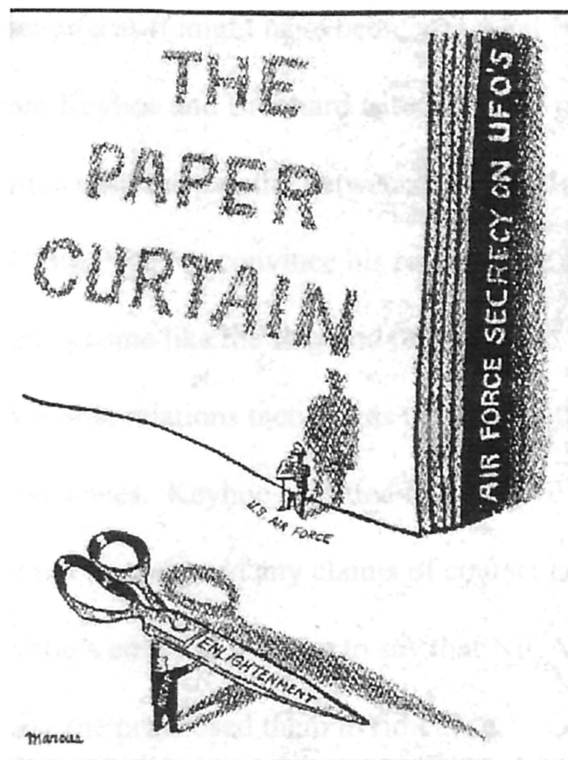


Figure 1- NICAP presents itself as the bringer of enlightenment

¹¹ Elaine Tyler May discusses the idea of domestic containment in *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic, 1988). Alan Nadel takes a wider look at American culture in an age of containment in *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

This cartoon, from the first issue of NICAP's *UFO Investigator*, shows NICAP as a small civilian who carries enlightenment to the Air Force figure who guards the Air Force's secrets on UFOs from the prying eyes of the public. The artist makes use of Cold War imagery through the use of a Paper Curtain—a barrier to enlightenment which the forces of NICAP must overcome. Not only does the Paper Curtain keep the public out, it contains and barricades the secrets behind itself.¹²

Keyhoe believed there existed scientific information that held unimaginable consequences for the human race and that this information languished in some government vault. The Cold War military-intelligence complex, in its fervor to protect the citizens of the United States, had gone too far. That barrier between government and the people, as well intentioned as it might have been, was what NICAP saw as the enemy. The conversation between Keyhoe and Brennard is reminiscent of Orwell's *1984*, published in 1949. Keyhoe used the parallel between that book's Big Brother and Brennard's reference to "Big Papa" to convince his readers that, if UFO secrecy continued, the U.S. might become like the England of *1984*.

One of NICAP's public relations tactics was to distance themselves from the colorful stories of the Contactees. Keyhoe admitted that NICAP officials had "seen no evidence but also [have] not investigated any claims of contact or communication with the saucer people." Keyhoe's editorial went on to say that NICAP felt contact stories should be avoided because the press used them to ridicule all saucer investigations.¹³ The only way Contactees could gain credence in the eyes of NICAP, and have their stories endorsed by the organization, was to submit notarized statements from witnesses.

¹² *UFO Investigator*, 1, July 1957: 2.

¹³ "Policy on Contact Claims Announced," *UFO Investigator*, 1, July 1957: 19, 28.

Contactees also had to provide evidence that they initiated slander suits against anyone who called them a liar or hoaxer. Additionally, they had to appear before and be questioned by the NICAP board, and agree to take a polygraph test. NICAP required these draconian steps from no other types of saucer witnesses.¹⁴ This treatment of those claiming to have had contact experiences widened the gulf between NICAP and what Keyhoe considered fringe elements of saucer research. Unfortunately, it also alienated a large number of saucer believers whom Keyhoe might have better utilized as allies in his quest for reform.

Increasingly, the differences between saucer investigation organizations grew beyond quarrels over the exact origin of the saucers. Saucer researchers and organizations began to attack each other with regularity, launching accusations of retarding progress in getting truth about saucers to the public. A clear illustration of this deepening divide is the rift between Keyhoe's NICAP and the Aerial Phenomenon Research Organization (APRO) founded and run by Wisconsin housewife Corel Lorenzen. Lorenzen and numerous APRO correspondents reported on all manner of saucer sightings from around the world. APRO did not accept the claims of Adamski or the other Contactees, but did report other types of encounters with alleged beings from space. APRO also assiduously avoided making any accusations that the U.S. Air Force engaged in hiding information from the public about UFOs.¹⁵ In an editorial from July 1962, entitled, "Support NICAP?" Lorenzen explained

The major difference between NICAP and APRO is that NICAP concentrates on lobbying while APRO is primarily concerned with research. We do not

¹⁴ "Contactees Respond to NICAP Request," *UFO Investigator*, 2, August 1957: 18.

¹⁵ Corel Lorenzen, *Flying Saucers: The Startling Evidence of the Invasion from Outer Space* (New York: Signet Books, 1962), vii.

participate in lobbying efforts for 2 reasons: (1) we would lose our tax-exempt status (2) we feel that we are more effective in other areas; that, in fact, lobbying would lessen this effectiveness.

As evidence of that effectiveness, Lorenzen stated that her books on saucer encounters have drawn “the endorsements of the scientific community.”¹⁶ For Lorenzen, the saucer question would be solved by careful, scientific investigation. The answers were all contained in the sightings and encounters themselves. The USAF didn’t have any secret knowledge that couldn’t be discovered by scientists and civilians who studied saucer events.

NICAP opposed what it saw as unwillingness on the part of the Air Force to investigate the saucer mystery. Coral Lorenzen held similar views about the scientific establishment of the time. To Lorenzen, the advent of the flying saucers represented

Intelligent beings from outside our own planet, fully capable of getting at us and implicitly superior to us in development . . . I feel strongly this must underlie the unwillingness of most scientists, who are supposed to be open-minded, to admit that [Kenneth] Arnold and his successors actually saw something. There also was the implication that we were doing a certain amount of floundering and muddling in our laboratories.

Lorenzen went on to detail the different aspects of society—religion, politics, the concept of nations and race—which would change if the saucer visitors made themselves known to humanity. It was this, Lorenzen said, and not a government cover-up that bore responsibility for the scientific and media establishment dragging their feet in finding the

¹⁶ Lorenzen, “Support NICAP?”, *APRO Bulletin*, July, 1962: 1.

solution to the UFO problem.¹⁷ Like Adamski, Lorenzen believed that the space visitors would be able to teach humanity valuable lessons. She recognized that acceptance of extraterrestrial life would carry with it powerful social and cultural consequences. By not allowing themselves to accept the possibility of space visitors, mainstream scientists were falling prey to human pride and arrogance.

Despite disagreement over the role of the government in the saucer cover-up, both APRO and NICAP operated from the same premise: science would ultimately provide the answer to the origin and purpose of the flying saucers. The difference between APRO and NICAP lay in their methods. Lorenzen and APRO asserted that amateur investigators providing observations to qualified scientists was the most promising method. Keyhoe and NICAP believed that the truth about the saucers would not come to light while the government and military sat on vital clues and information. Only an open, televised Congressional investigation could force the “Silence Group” to give up that information to the scientists who would then find the answers.

The rift in saucer research was not confined to the large national organizations. An extreme example was independent researcher G. Patrick Wyllie, who believed that NICAP was a “secretly sponsored Government mouthpiece to leak out official UFO data,” demonstrating that Keyhoe’s paradigm of government cover-ups and duplicity had not only taken hold in saucer research but was even being used against him.¹⁸ NICAP also alienated those moderates on the saucer issue who were more interested in reports of sightings than in congressional lobbying efforts. Even luminary James Moseley was, as late as 1970, rejected for membership. NICAP’s reasoning was that Moseley was

¹⁷ Lorenzen, *Flying Saucers*, 87.

¹⁸ G. Patrick Wyllie to Gray Barker, 8, 16, February 1960, Gray Barker Collection, Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library, Clarksburg, West Virginia (Hereafter Gray Barker Collection).

unsuitable for membership because, “It is apparent that your interests and activities . . . are, to a considerable extent, incompatible with the purposes and policies of NICAP.”

Moseley’s main work in the flying saucer field consisted mostly of providing a forum for researchers to publicly air their grievances with each other. The gossiping and sniping that took place in the pages of *Saucer News* provided more insight into the minds of saucer researchers than it did into the mystery of the saucers themselves. NICAP also cited Moseley’s involvement with “individuals such as Gray Barker” as good reasons for rejection.¹⁹ Moseley personally felt that the rejection was due more to his embarrassment of Keyhoe back during his pre-NICAP days in 1954. Moseley had pointed out in *Nexus* that many of Keyhoe’s “confidential” sources were Pentagon public information officers who gave Keyhoe information that was not, in fact, in any way secret or confidential. Keyhoe embarrassed by this revelation and with an eye to guarding his book sales and reputation, suspected Moseley of constantly trying to scoop his sighting reports.²⁰ Whatever the reason, NICAP’s rejection of Moseley illustrated the organization’s desire to cast saucer research in its own image: serious rather than light-hearted.

One way to gauge the degree to which Donald Keyhoe and NICAP alienated other branches of saucer research during the years between the publication of *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* (1955) and *Flying Saucers: Top Secret* (1960) is to examine the forewords of the two books. In *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*, Keyhoe acknowledged the help and work of dozens of other UFO researchers, including the heads of other saucer organizations such as Corel Lorenzen. In the later book, published well after Keyhoe took control of NICAP, he acknowledged only members of his own organization,

¹⁹ Stuart Nixon to James Moseley, 29 July 1970, Gray Barker Collection.

²⁰ Moseley & Pflock, 44-48.

reporting that the NICAP board had voted to “publicly [confirm] Air Force censorship and withholding of UFO reports.” They then declared this policy to be “inherently dangerous.”²¹ The scenario that this foreword set out was one in which NICAP was not only at the forefront of fighting government secrecy, but that they are the only ones attempting to do so. Saucer books which focused exclusively on NICAP operations, combined with Keyhoe’s numerous appearances on radio and television talk shows helped establish NICAP as the major saucer research organization in the United States. The rise of NICAP as the main saucer organization in the country had the effect of marginalizing other groups and researchers, giving the impression that their views were somehow not as important or solid as those of NICAP. Thus, the fortunes of American saucer research became, in large part, tied to the fortunes of NICAP

In 1966 years of public curiosity about flying saucers came to a head. In April, several widely reported sightings took place throughout eastern Michigan. One object was sighted by dozens of witnesses at Hillsdale College. The Air Force’s project Blue Book investigated and after a week of interviews, scientific advisor J. Allen Hynek went before the press and suggested that the object might have been nothing more than luminescent marsh gas. Many in the media and public scoffed at this explanation. Michigan representatives Gerald Ford and Weston Vivian opened hearings into the question of just what was up there. An editorial in *America: The National Catholic Weekly Review*, a news magazine for American Roman Catholics, called the explanation “a whitewash” and concluded

Before the Michigan UFO is quietly buried in the pages of the Air Force Blue Book as just another “unidentified flying object,” we hope Congressman Ford, or

²¹ Keyhoe, *Flying Saucers: Top Secret*, 10.

somebody, can force a wholesale review of the whole UFO phenomenon. It's been around a long time.²²

This moment was the culmination of NICAP's efforts—the saucer question had received enough attention from the public that Congress was forced to investigate the phenomenon independently of the Air Force. Within weeks of the Michigan sightings, the House armed services committee was interviewing former heads of project Blue Book and several scientists. At the suggestion of Air Force Secretary Harold D. Brown, the decision of Congress was that an extensive research project, conducted by a major research university, had the most promise of success in lifting the veil of military and intelligence secrecy.²³

By mid-1967, the USAF had chosen physicist Edward U. Condon to head the committee, which consisted of chemists, engineers, meteorologists, and scientists of other disciplines. The Committee, though civilian and based at the University of Colorado, was administered and funded by the Air Force. Their goal was to determine whether or not Unidentified Flying Objects deserved further scientific study, that the "Work will be conducted under condition of strictest objectivity by investigators who have no . . . Preconceived positions on the UFO question."²⁴ This development thrilled Keyhoe and NICAP and they offered the use of their extensive case files to the Committee. APRO was similarly enthusiastic, since they had long been clamoring for scientists to take the question of saucers more seriously.²⁵

²² "Marsh Gas in Michigan," *America: The National Catholic Weekly Review*, April 9, 1966 in David, 211-212.

²³ Peebles, 171.

²⁴ Peebles, 179.

²⁵ Since the early 1960s, the Contactees had moved further away from the saucer mainstream, and none of the major Contactees who were still active held opinions on the development.

Almost from the beginning, the Committee was plagued with troubles. One of the most fundamental was the confusion among the Committee's staff over what their goal actually was. Some of the scientists thought that their goal was to explain away or debunk saucer sightings. Others, such as electrical engineer David Saunders thought their goal was to test the hypothesis that UFOs were extraterrestrial, thus acknowledging that the witnesses were seeing *something*. The fact that members of the Committee already had strong feelings about saucers one way or the other seemingly violated the previously stated principle of disinterested, objective investigators. Despite this apparent conflict, the Committee went ahead.

The next major crisis occurred in 1968 when David Saunders, one of the saucer-sympathetic members of the committee, leaked to the press a memo to the staff from project coordinator Robert Low. Low said of the Committee's goals that:

The trick would be, I think, to describe the project so that, to the public, it would appear a totally objective study but, to the scientific community, would present the image of a group of nonbelievers trying their best to be objective but having an almost zero expectation of finding a saucer.²⁶

Saunders and several other members of the Committee, sympathetic to saucers being worthy of research and believing that their views would not be taken into account, resigned. NICAP publicly denounced the Committee and ceased all cooperation with them. John Fuller, a journalist and author of several saucer books, wrote a scathing

²⁶ David R. Saunders and R. Roger Harkins, *UFOs? Yes! Where the Condon Committee Went Wrong* (New York: World Publishing, 1969), 129.

article in *Look* magazine castigating the Committee and questioning its true purpose, since the leaked memo cast strong doubt on their ability to be objective.²⁷

The Condon Committee shrugged off the scandal and issued its findings on January 9, 1969. The report was published in a widely available 963 page paperback from Bantam Books. Articles summarizing the findings appeared in periodicals as widely divergent as *Book World*²⁸, *Popular Science*²⁹, and *The Nation*³⁰. The gist of the report was that

Nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge . . . Further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby.³¹

Thus, after 18 months of research, establishment science determined not only that not only was there was no proof that the sightings were extraterrestrial, but neither was there any scientific value to be gained from continued study of the topic.

The aftermath of the Condon Report had a drastic impact on the way in which NICAP conducted their investigations. From the mid 1950s through 1967, the organization's *raison d'être* was to convince Congress to commission an independent scientific investigation. That investigation took place and those in charge found NICAP's hypothesis of the saucers' extraterrestrial origins to be untenable. NICAP survived as an organization but shifted its emphasis. In May 1969, NICAP released this statement:

²⁷ John Fuller, "Flying Saucer Fiasco," *Look*, 14 May 1968: 58-63.

²⁸ 28 February and 4 May, 1969.

²⁹ April, 1969.

³⁰ 27 January, 1969.

³¹ Edward U. Condon, *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), 1.

The purpose of NICAP is to investigate, study, research, and report on aerial, atmospheric, and space phenomenon . . . it being NICAP's object to secure reliable, scientific information and data on said phenomena, to subject such information and data to systematic and objective examination and evaluation and to make such information, data, and examination and evaluation results generally available.³²

This statement makes no claims as to the interplanetary origin of the saucers. This stands in stark contrast to Keyhoe's personal position statement—made during the halcyon days of 1957—in which he claimed, “the evidence that the UFOs are real, and are interplanetary machines, is conclusive.”³³ In the face of dwindling membership and accusations of financial mismanagement, the NICAP board forced Donald Keyhoe out of the directorship in December 1969. By 1971, NICAP's membership dropped to 4000 from a mid-60s high of 12,000. The organization lingered on until the early 1980s but never again held a position as the primary voice of serious saucer study.³⁴

The Condon Committee's failure to vindicate the claims of NICAP, APRO, and other scientifically oriented saucer organizations did not deter them from continuing to seek a scientific explanation for the saucers. Indeed, NICAP's 1969 Statement of Policy emphasized the scientific aspect of the search for UFOs, rather than the political or social aspects of the question. Just because those particular scientists did not produce the results that the UFO community wanted to hear did not mean that science itself was an enemy of saucer researchers. Rather, Keyhoe determined that just as the Cold War military-intelligence complex worked to keep details of sightings from investigators and

³² “Report of NICAP Board Meeting,” *UFO Investigator*, Vol. 4, No. 11, May, 1969: 2.

³³ “Statement of Policy,” *UFO Investigator*, 1, July, 1957: 29.

³⁴ Peebles, 191-194.

the public, so too did the CIA and the military improperly influence the Condon Committee, stacking the deck with anti-saucer scientists.³⁵

Even after his ouster as head of NICAP, Keyhoe continued writing on the saucer topic. In several important ways, Keyhoe's message had not changed since the late 1950s. His final book, *Aliens From Space*, was published in 1973. In this volume, Keyhoe discussed the many events of the 1960s and cast the CIA as the main culprit behind the saucer cover-up. Additionally, in the wake of the Condon Committee ruling, Keyhoe spent a great deal of time discussing qualified scientists who did not accept the government's explanations and dismissals of saucer reports. Indeed, one appendix of the book listed scientists who rejected the Condon Committee report. The other appendix was a list of retired and reserve military personnel who opposed the government's policy of keeping important saucer information out of the hands of the public.³⁶ Besides reporting on the cover-up, Keyhoe wrote *Aliens From Space* to "arouse public and congressional support for an end to the secrecy—without recriminations—and for a new, practical program to learn the answers to the UFO problem."³⁷ Despite the disappointing results of the Condon Committee report, Keyhoe persisted in encouraging readers to write, asking their members of Congress to help in "ending the secrecy and revealing the truth. You have a right to know—whatever the answers may prove to be."³⁸ For Keyhoe, the wall of secrecy and official denial still stood, and still needed to be demolished.

³⁵ Donald Keyhoe, *Aliens From Space* (New York: Signet, 1973), 110

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 255-264.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, ix.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

Large, national flying saucer research organizations such as NICAP and APRO had a similar goal than that of the Contactees. The Contactees wanted to reform society along the same lines as those of their celestial visitors. Researchers like Keyhoe and Lorenzen set their sights lower: convincing the American government and the scientific establishment that the possibility of intelligent extraterrestrial life existed and deserved careful consideration. Both groups—Contactees and “serious” saucer believers—recognized that there were aspects of Cold War society that needed reform. For people like Keyhoe and Lorenzen, the scope of their reforms was narrower and less radical. Nonetheless, their efforts represented an important example of resistance to the official secret-keeping and political restriction of American Cold War society. Keyhoe’s demands were not revolutionary. He did not seek the overthrow of capitalism, or a complete change in the way people related to each other. He had no dreams of world peace, international cooperation or any of the other desires of the Contactees. He simply wanted his government to tell the truth—to share what it knew about flying saucers with the American public. Coral Lorenzen wanted even less. She argued for people in all segments of American society to simply keep an open mind about the possibility of other civilizations visiting ours.

But the fact that their demands were not as drastic as the Contactees’ does not render them less significant. Keyhoe’s questioning of the government’s secrecy on the flying saucer issue served to open the door for other questions. Was the government, through its Cold War creation, the CIA, truly becoming “Big Papa” as Keyhoe wrote in *Flying Saucers: Top Secret?* Keyhoe spent most of his adult life in service to the United States government, either in the military or civil service. He consistently went out of his

way to avoid questioning the patriotism of the government officials involved in the perceived UFO cover-up. Despite that underlying faith, he disapproved of such overarching secrecy and he spent more than twenty years of his life fighting to restore *complete* integrity to a system which he believed to be infested by a few individuals with misguided—not malicious—intentions.

From the tenacity and determination shown by Keyhoe and other members of NICAP and APRO, it is not difficult to imagine them pursuing the remedy of any injustice with the same drive with which they attacked the UFO question. Like the Contactees, saucer researchers like Keyhoe and Lorenzen worked to change systems they thought corrupt but ultimately capable of redemption. For both Keyhoe and Lorenzen, their efforts concentrated on returning power to the people of the United States, giving them ownership of the saucer problem, and taking this problem out of the hands of those in government and scientific establishments who would keep that knowledge for themselves.

Chapter Five

"So let us carry on seriously, but not too seriously, groping for The Truth."

Conclusions

Despite their differences, all varieties of saucer belief had important things to say about American politics, culture, and society. The Contactees, the "serious" researchers, as well as the moderates such as James Moseley all used the medium of saucer belief to convey political and cultural ideals to the American public. Whether these ideals focused on the need for world peace and international cooperation or attacked the American government for its increasing secrecy on the flying saucer issue, the fact that they were wrapped up in the lore of flying saucers ensured that thousands of Americans would take notice.

The gulf between different types of saucer believer sometimes seem so vast that one might be hard pressed to find any solid common ground. There is, however, one over-riding theme to saucer belief during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. That theme is the search for enlightenment, and the belief that this enlightenment would make the United States a stronger, better nation and the world a better place. For the Contactees, enlightenment came from above; it came from star visitors who had gone through the same growing pains that humanity felt at the dawn of the atomic age. The enlightenment they brought would raise the people of Earth to a higher level of spiritual development, forcing them to leave behind all materialistic trappings and lust for power. For other saucer researchers and organizations, enlightenment came from below. It came from the people who spent their lives trying to determine the truth about flying saucers. Some believed this enlightening from below could tear down the wall of secrecy between the

government and its people. Others believed that their efforts to solve the puzzle of the flying saucers would emancipate the hidebound and reactionary scientific community from a quagmire of close-mindedness and bondage to the national defense structure.

During the Cold War, the need for enlightenment grew stronger by the day. Two superpowers teetered on the brink of annihilation—the weapons humanity had developed left no room for diplomatic blunders or trigger-happy politicians. For George Adamski, enlightenment was something about which he had evangelized for years before flying saucers entered the public eye. In the 1920s and '30s, enlightenment meant abandoning material greed and diverting the course of humankind from militarism to peaceful cooperation. In the '40s, '50s, and '60s enlightenment involved turning away from the path of atomic warfare. The end result of this transformation would be a society akin to the utopias that existed on Adamski's Venus and Saturn. After the horrors of a half-century of wars, totalitarianism, and economic travails, Adamski and the Contactees gave Americans a glimpse of what America could become. The world they presented to Americans was a world without fear or want—it was truly the utopia for which so many had searched for centuries. Most Americans, however, could not look past the hubcap flying saucer models and the rest of Adamski's outlandish stories. Those who came after Adamski made matters worse—their stories were even more unbelievable; their evidence (if they offered any) was flimsy and easily debunked. With Adamski's death in 1965, the hope for enlightenment from the stars faded away.

Donald Keyhoe sought enlightenment also. The cartoon in the first issue of *The UFO Investigator* conveyed that clearly. For Keyhoe, enlightenment could, with the right leadership and organization, come through the American people. Keyhoe believed

in the power of the American republic to repair itself, to solve its own problems. He repeatedly urged NICAP members to contact their Congressional representatives. He consistently pleaded for the government to cooperate with civilian saucer research organizations. The government, in the forms of the Air Force and CIA had initiated the problem of flying saucer secrecy. Despite this, Keyhoe believed that the solution to the UFO question could, and should, come about through traditional democratic processes: the American people seeking justice and satisfaction from their elected officials.

Corel Lorenzen, and others like her, sought enlightenment through the reformation of mainstream science. Like Keyhoe, they felt that both individual researchers and large organizations had the ability and the responsibility to bring the enlightenment of flying saucer reality to the people of Earth. Lorenzen believed that fear held scientists back from closely examining UFO phenomenon because to do so might expose the ignorance of Human science and technology. Lorenzen urged scientists to embrace the enlightenment that a truly open-minded scientific investigation would bring.

Keyhoe and Lorenzen got their wish in 1967 with the creation of the Condon Committee. The government had decided to let science have a crack at solving the mystery of the flying saucers. For the first few months saucer believers were optimistic—perhaps enlightenment would come to humanity after all. As we have seen, the results of the Condon study let saucer researchers down badly. In the eyes of the public, their demands, assertions and wishes were just as disreputable and unproven as the Contactees. Enlightenment, it seemed, would not come from the U.S. government. So the Contactees and the major research oriented saucer groups not only shared in

common their desire for enlightenment to envelope humanity but also shared in the despair of having their dreams deflated and ridiculed by the people they sought to help and empower. Followers left Contactee groups and membership dropped in APRO and NICAP, ending the dream of enlightenment and change for the Cold War world.

The different strands of flying saucer belief would continue to evolve and develop through the 1970s, '80s, '90s and into the new millennium. The effects of the Condon committee report led to a downturn in saucer sighting reports during the early 1970s. Organizations such as NICAP and APRO found their memberships declining throughout the decade. Some members disappeared from saucer research altogether. Others joined the upstart MUFON organization. APRO member Walter Andrus founded the Mutual UFO Network on a basis of careful scientific investigation. MUFON specialized in examining and analyzing photographs, physical evidence from UFO sightings, and other trappings of "real" science. Within five years, it was the largest UFO organization in the US. Within fifteen years, it would be the only major organization in the country.

The Contactees were also going through some significant changes during the 1970s. Since the mid-'60s, Contactee groups had been growing more and more isolated from the mainstream of UFO research. Exposés of most of the major Contactees destroyed much of their credibility with the general public and by the 1970s most Contactee groups had evolved into cults which concentrated on individual spiritual evolution and receiving personal messages from the space visitors almost exclusively through psychic means rather than physical contact. Some of the groups that appeared during this time were the Raelian cult in Quebec (which sought to perfect human cloning)

and Marshall Applewhite's Heaven's Gate group which made the headlines in April of 1997 following a ritualistic mass suicide.

During the 1970s the seeds of UFO myths were sown which would become very important in the 1980s and '90s. Primary among these was the phenomenon of "abductions." During an abduction experience, victims would be taken, often against their will, to an alien spaceship. Here, the aliens (now non-humanoid, as opposed to the visitors described by Contactees) performed various medical procedures and tests. Accounts of abductions usually arose during deep hypnosis sessions with therapists, casting doubt on the whole phenomenon. The abduction phenomenon carried with it conflicting messages. Some claimed that the aliens were peaceful, some claimed that they were an invading force, sent to infiltrate and subjugate Earth society.¹ Gone, for the most part, were concerns over any message or plan the aliens had for humanity. The very frightening and traumatic abduction experience overshadowed most attempts at finding deeper meaning.

Two other major incidents that would provide a foundation for '80s and '90s saucer research were cattle mutilations and the 1947 Roswell, New Mexico saucer crash. Mutilations of cattle, horses, and other animals, often showing surgical precision, began to appear in the western United States in the Spring of 1973. Originally attributed to satanic cults, UFO researchers co-opted the "epidemic" and declared (with no proof) that aliens were performing experiments on earth animals.² The Roswell Incident referred to the alleged crash, and subsequent Army retrieval, of an alien spacecraft. Several variations of this story exist—depending on which witnesses were consulted there were

¹ Peebles, 207.

² *Ibid.*, 215-224.

anywhere from one to four saucers that crashed. Most sources acknowledge that the Army also collected somewhere between zero and twelve alien bodies.³

In the 1980s, continued reports of abductions and mutilations, combined with the publishing of several books about Roswell, led to the establishment of a sort of unified field theory of saucer lore referred to by some researchers as the Dark Side Hypothesis.⁴ Briefly, the Dark Side Hypothesis proposes that when the alien craft(s) crashed at Roswell, the Army captured a live alien pilot. President Truman created a secret cabal of government officials, collectively known as MJ-12 to deal with the situation and, above all, keep all knowledge about alien craft and interaction from reaching the public. MJ-12 then negotiated a secret treaty with the alien and his people. In exchange for amazing technological advances, the US government would turn a blind eye to the (generally hostile) aliens' abductions of humans and mutilations of animals. The alien race (which was dying) was using humanity to create a clone-able human/alien hybrid that they would then use to subdue the Earth and conquer it.⁵ The US government knew this and was secretly developing weapons to fight the aliens. There exist some variations to this story. Some researchers contend that there were good aliens helping humanity. Others claimed that there were no aliens and that the government used the stories about alien

³ *Ibid.*, 242-255.

⁴ Most UFO researchers credit John Lear with coining the phrase Dark Side Hypothesis. Originally, it applied only to Lear's specific claims about the UFO cover up (see http://www.worldofthestrange.com/documents/d/dark_side_hypothesis.htm for more information). Increasingly, however, it is used to describe any UFO theory which presents extraterrestrials as invaders or conquerors.

⁵ This theory is most succinctly stated in "The Krill Papers," an anonymously written, unpublished document which circulates on the Internet (and before the Internet, through computer Bulletin Board Systems). A complete copy resides at <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/pages/krill.html>.

malevolence as an excuse to impose dictatorship upon us.⁶ A third theory is that the aliens were not evil, just misunderstood and that they only wanted to help us.⁷ The Dark Side Hypothesis served as the basis for many television shows throughout the 1990s, including *The X-Files*, *Dark Skies*, and *Roswell*.

As the 21st century dawned, much of the furor from the Dark Side Hypothesis died down due to a total lack of credible proof. The state of UFOlogy today is once again a dual stranded world containing the political activism of NICAP and the social messages of the Contactees. An important difference between the UFO world of the Cold War and now is that there is more cooperation between different strands of saucer research. Primary among the political lobbying effort is Steven Greer, MD and his organization The Disclosure Project. Greer began his UFOlogical career leading groups of followers into empty fields to “signal” any passing saucers with high-powered flashlights.⁸ Thus, the legacy of the Contactee era, in a way, lived on into the 1990s. Today, however, Greer’s efforts are largely confined to soliciting former military officials to act as “witnesses” to all manner of secret technology the government has “back-engineered” from captured alien technology. Much like Coral Lorenzen, Greer and his supporters look for scientific and technological enlightenment to come down from the heavens and reform our moribund scientific establishment. Greer presents his witnesses to the National Press Club and has briefed Congressional staffers. Since the initiative’s

⁶ This theory was popularized by the late William Cooper, a one-time UFO researcher who abandoned the field to devote his energies to the Militia movement in Arizona. He laid out his argument in his “Majestytwelve” document at <http://www.williamcooper.com/majesty.htm>.

⁷ Popularized mainly by Dr. Richard Boylan. His website <http://www.drboylan.com> contains several articles which elaborate on his theory.

⁸ James Moseley and Karl Pflock, *Shockingly Close to the Truth! Confessions of a Grave-Robbing UFOlogist* (Amhearst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 324-325.

beginnings in 1997, there have been no public disclosures of the government's knowledge of "UFO reality."⁹

One adherent to the neo-Contactee view of human-alien interaction is Richard Boylan, a psychologist and (self-proclaimed and trained) counselor of those who claim to have been victims of an alien abduction. Boylan insists that there are several benevolent races of extraterrestrials that wish humanity to rise about international conflict and war. Boylan feels that many of the Contactees of the 1950s and '60s were genuine. In an email-interview he said, "George Adamski apparently has realk [sic] encounters with Star Visitor craft and their occupants." And that "the Star Visitors held clear views about certain follies of Earth societal and political positions, and. . .the Contactees of the 50s and early 60s were merely repeating what the Visitors had told/shown them."¹⁰

James Moseley is still active in the saucer scene—the sole survivor from the 1950s era of UFO research. He publishes *Saucer Smear*, a monthly newsletter which features saucer news, gossip about personalities, and heated arguments between saucer researchers whose letters to the editor focus less on saucers than they do on personal attacks. Moseley's theory about the saucers has evolved over the years. Currently, he admits that he has no idea what they are, but that no one else does either. If they are anything, he says, they are likely part of the planet around us—a component of our environment that we don't have the ability to truly comprehend.¹¹

Clearly, many of the same themes exist in saucer research today as did forty years ago. Steven Greer is doing many of the same things that Keyhoe did in his quest for

⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰ Richard Boylan, <drboylan@sbcglobal.net> "Re: Questions about Early UFOlogy," March 28, 2003, personal email (March 28, 2003).

¹¹ James Moseley, "'Smear' Editor's Personal 'Position Statement'" *Saucer Smear*, Vol. 46, No. 7, July 1, 1999: 1.

government disclosure of saucer data and evidence. Richard Boylan claims to have talked to aliens and relays their message of peace to all of humanity. Are these modern day saucer researchers as significant as Adamski and Keyhoe? I tend to think not. The reasons have less to do with the message of the saucer researchers than it does with those of us who hear that message. Decades of saturation—*Star Trek*, *Independence Day*, *The X-Files*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.—have dulled the impact that messages from the “aliens” might have on the public. We heard messages of peace and love coming from quarters much more credible than George Adamski. The American people no longer need to be convinced that their government is hiding information from them—the effects of Vietnam, Watergate, October Surprise, Iran-Contra, and the ramshackle election of 2000 have succeeded in eroding peoples’ trust in the American government. Who cares if the Air Force has information about the space people? Americans are more worried that the government has information about their political affiliations or medical history.

Time and technology have rendered obsolete the flying saucers’ efficacy as a medium for political and social discourse. We have ships that can travel in space, and maneuver the way Adamski’s saucers once did. But once upon a time, visitors from the stars and their messengers had an important message for humanity. No evidence ever existed that their stories were true but the messages of peace, love, cooperation, honesty, and openness resonated with those very few who cared to look deeper than the wild-eyed veneer of the true believer.

But what is the final legacy of these Cold War Americans who often sacrificed all hope of a normal life to spread messages of progress and enlightenment? Most have

forgotten them or, at most, remember only the most outrageous parts of their stories. It certainly does not seem that the world in 2003 is any more peaceful, selfless or enlightened than the world of 1953. Perhaps, however, we should not judge these people on whether or not they changed the world. Let us judge them on how hard they tried; judge them on the sacrifices they made to share their message. We should not forget the Adamskis, Keyholes, and Lorenzens, for they can still be prophets and teachers if we choose to let them.

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